

XVIIIth INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE
Stockholm, August 1948

REPORT
of the
International Committee of the Red Cross
on its activities
during the Second World War
(September 1, 1939 ~ June 30, 1947)

VOLUME I

GENERAL ACTIVITIES



GENEVA
May 1948

No. 1A

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PREFACE

The International Committee of the Red Cross¹ has the honour to submit to the Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference the present Report on the whole of its activities during and immediately after the second World War.

Following its usual practice, the Committee wishes to put before the Conference the information which will enable it to form an opinion on the way it has carried out the mandates laid on it by former International Red Cross Conferences, and also on the action it has taken when faced with the unforeseen emergencies of the War.

It is the hope of the Committee that this Report will serve too as a documentary background for the discussions from which the Conference can draw the necessary conclusions, when it opens to study the chief aspects of the work accomplished by the Red Cross in a period without compare in its history.

This Report is also intended for National Red Cross Societies², for Government authorities, for various humanitarian bodies and for members of the general public, who, since the war ended, have from time to time asked the Committee for detailed information on certain of its activities which, earlier, could only be given in part. It has also a particular message for the Authorities, Red Cross Societies, and individuals whose contributions have enabled the Committee to shoulder its many burdens and without which

¹ For the sake of brevity the International Committee of the Red Cross is herein after denoted by the initials ICRC.

² It may be mentioned, once and for all, that the expression "National Red Cross Societies" always includes the Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies.

its efforts might have proved fruitless. The Committee owes them its most sincere gratitude, and there is also due from it an account of the use it has made of their contributions. It has a similar obligation to the Authorities and Societies who entrusted to it very considerable relief supplies for distribution on their behalf to the victims of the war.

Despite the wish of the Committee to give an exhaustive record of its work, and although the present Report is indeed fairly extensive, it has not been possible in practice to give more than a summary, and sometimes only a skeleton account of such varied and complex activities. It has in this way, at times, had to be satisfied with only a glimpse of a particular piece of work at some given moment of its development, or a sample instance of certain undertakings, thus foregoing a description of every enterprise of a similar kind. Admittedly the reader will not always be able to find in the Report a complete and precise answer to questions which, from one point of view or another, he would like to put. The Committee, however, is at all times ready to give fuller details.

From the outset it should be borne in mind that this Report, as its title indicates, attempts no more than a record of the Committee's work. A clear picture of the condition of war-victims in each country must not be looked for, nor yet a critical or legal study of how far the terms of the Conventions have been observed. Likewise, the Committee reports only on its own task and makes no attempt to give an account of the achievements of other organizations which worked to great purpose, inspired by the same ideals, and often in close co-operation with it, to mitigate the sufferings of war victims. To have a comprehensive picture of what has been accomplished by the Red Cross, the reports of the National Societies and the League must be read in conjunction with this present record.

The drafting of such a Report might have been done in several ways. Each of the Departments might have had separate treatment; the Committee's work might have been described according to the country in which it was performed, or in reference to the nationality of the people to whom it devoted its labours. The Committee felt constrained, however, to adopt an alternative plan, and to arrange its material according to subject matter and in

reference to the categories of people who needed its help. Therefore, of the three volumes of the Report, one is given to the Committee's work in general, with stress on the protection of war victims, the second to the Central Prisoners of War Agency, i.e., to the supply of information about prisoners of war and internees; the third to relief in kind forwarded to them.

In the first and third volumes, the main headings indicate the various categories of war victims who are the care of the Committee: these are the sick and wounded of the armed forces, prisoners of war, civilian internees, civil populations etc. Within this general scheme, a distinction of nationalities is made in the text, wherever necessary. The activities described, however, are too complex to allow strict adherence to the precise classification which has been mentioned above. In this way, problems of relief connected with the war in the Far East have been given a place in Vol. I, because relief work was closely involved with protection in that theatre of war, and also because both were carried out by one and the same special department. It is in the first Volume too that aid to the sick and wounded of the armed forces is described.

Vol. I, on the Committee's general activities, contains a first Part which serves as an introduction to the whole Report and which must therefore be considered as covering all three volumes. It includes a paper entitled "Principles and Foundations of the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross", specially contributed by M. Max Huber, former President of the ICRC (now Honorary President). There follow chapters on the organization of the various departments, the Committee's delegations abroad, departments serving general purposes, the financing of the work, co-operation with National Red Cross Societies, the League, Governments and others. The second, third and fourth Parts give the details of general activities for the protection of the wounded and sick of armed forces, prisoners of war and civilians.

Vol. II is of a more technical nature and deals with the work of the Central Prisoners of War Agency and the extension of its researches to cover civilians. After the introduction, Part I gives a general survey of the working methods adopted by the Agency, and Part II has particular reference to the development of the various departments.

Vol. III deals with relief in kind to war victims. The subject-matter is dealt with rather more fully than in the first two volumes, as it includes the report submitted by the Committee to the various organizations on whose behalf they distributed supplies, and to whom is due a detailed account of their commission¹. Almost every relief operation, moreover, raised its own particular problems of technical complexity and required to be adapted to the circumstances. The first Part of the volume treats these problems as a whole; the second concerns transport and communications; the third deals with the technical means employed for carrying out relief, and the fourth the part played by the Committee with regard to relief measures in behalf of civil populations.

The Report in its three volumes covers the period September 1, 1939, the day of the outbreak of war, to June 30, 1947. The duties imposed on the Committee by the war did not in fact cease in any way with the close of military operations, but went on during the post-war years with a striking continuity, due above all, to the great number of prisoners of war still held in captivity and to the distress of civil populations. The date of June 30, 1947, was cited as a limit in order to give the Committee the necessary time to prepare the present Report, to have it translated into English and Spanish, and, if possible, printed three months before the opening of the Seventeenth International Conference. The Report will be completed by roneoed annexes which the Committee will also submit to the Conference and which will cover, first, their activities from March, 1938 to August, 1939, and secondly, from July, 1947 to the end of June, 1948.

As some features of its humanitarian activities have been dealt with in special reports prepared for the Seventeenth Conference, the Committee has done no more in the present report than refer the reader to them. The texts principally concern the work of the Foundation for Red Cross Maritime Transports, the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, and the Greek Relief Commission.

¹ The annex to Vol. III contains solely technical information, such as statistics and summary tables for the use of the institutions from whom donations were received. The Committee will, however, be pleased to provide copies for other persons who are interested in the matter.

The Committee published early in 1947 a survey of their work during the second World War, entitled "Inter Arma Caritas", which has been printed in five languages. As a narrative in simple form it will serve as an historical supplement to this Report.

PART I

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I. Principles and Foundations of the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross ¹

(A). PRINCIPLES

1. The Red Cross Idea

Since the year 1863, when a committee of five citizens of Geneva, with Henry Dunant as their leading spirit and General Dufour at their head, gave the first impulse to the world-wide movement of the Red Cross, based on the formation of National Societies, and to the first Geneva Convention of 1864, the Red Cross, both as a humanitarian and a social institution has attained far wider scope than its founders ever contemplated.

The distinctive character of the Red Cross organisations' manifold services to nations and humanity, the inherent qualities by which they differ from other and similar philanthropic works, lie in the *particular idea for which the Red Cross stands*. To grasp this underlying principle we must go back to the object which the founders of the Red Cross and the authors of the Geneva Convention had in view. Institutions live and endure by virtue of the steadfastness with which, amidst the changes of the times and despite the appropriate adjustments to new conditions, they remain true to the moral values, in defence of which they made their appearance in history.

The first paragraph of Article 6 of the Geneva Convention of August 22, 1864 sets out in the sober language of international

¹ This Chapter has been written to serve as an Introduction to the Report of the ICRC, by M. Max Huber, President of the International Committee during the Second World War, now Honorary President.

treaties a high moral principle which was destined to produce far-reaching effects. It runs thus :

Wounded and sick members of armed forces shall be protected and cared for, without distinction of nationality.

This means that in the midst of war and fighting, when the whole will of the opposing forces is strained towards mutual annihilation, *succour is demanded for the defenceless victims of hostilities.*

Not less significant than the will to give effective aid is the principle of absolute *impartiality*. Relief is offered to everyone, even to the enemy. Over all differences, even those antagonisms of which war between peoples is the most violent expression, stands the *respect for the human being* in every man, at the moment when he is defenceless and abandons the fight.

For aid to the defenceless, and at first for that aid only, the Geneva Convention devised a method of protection against acts of war, adopting to this end the *symbol of the Red Cross*, to distinguish persons and establishments connected with the work of giving such aid to the wounded and sick members of the fighting forces.

2. The Task of the Red Cross

Ever since the Red Cross came into existence, the National Societies as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross have applied themselves to many and vast undertakings which far outstrip the original aims of the movement. The National Societies could not do otherwise, if they meant to become vital and effective institutions, adapted to the special needs of their respective countries.

The functions of the International Committee, too, have greatly expanded since its early beginnings, partly in connexion with the National Societies' own development, but more especially on account of new tasks assumed in the spirit of the Geneva Convention, either on the Committee's own initiative, or at the request of the International Red Cross Conferences. Most of these latter-day activities as a whole had already

occurred to Dunant's forward-looking mind, as for example relief to Prisoners of War, and to Civilian Populations in time of war and disaster. The enlightened prudence which was a main factor in the swift success of the Committee's early beginnings, must be coupled with a spirit of initiative, both when seeking to introduce new provisions into international law, and when working out practical relief schemes in time of war or general distress.

As originally designed, the object of the Red Cross was to give aid in war, and it was provided with its special protection in international law for this purpose. The widening of its sphere of activity in time of war is therefore still of peculiar importance.

With aid to *wounded and sick members of the fighting forces* regulated by the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1906 and 1929 as its starting points, the International Committee soon extended its range of interest to embrace prisoners of war as well. During the first World War, and to an even greater extent during the second, one of the main tasks of the Red Cross Societies of belligerent countries — besides their essential and initial work of training and supplying nursing personnel — was to send relief to their compatriots who were *prisoners of war and interned civilians in enemy territory*.

For the International Committee, however, the prisoners of war and interned civilians of all belligerent countries without distinction were equally eligible for the work of aid which the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war makes incumbent upon this institution, investing it with authority to carry out all humanitarian projects in this field, particularly the establishment of a Central Agency for the receiving and transmission of news concerning prisoners.

In the first World War it had already become apparent that the protection which international law afforded *civilian populations* subjected to enemy occupation or otherwise directly affected by acts of war, was still wholly inadequate. The evolution in methods of warfare, the enlisting of the nations' total economic forces in the war effort, and the excesses of occupation authorities during the recent War, increased the

dangers to which civilians are exposed, by placing them in no less a peril than members of the fighting forces at the front.

In view of these circumstances, the International Committee endeavoured, from the year 1918 onward, to secure increased protection in law for these possible victims of future wars. Though, up to 1939, that aim had not yet been achieved, the Committee was nevertheless able to arrive at two notable practical results in the way of material aid to civilians. Unremitting efforts to obtain temporary implementing of the Draft Convention relative to Civilians, endorsed by the International Red Cross Conference held at Tokyo in 1934, led to the application by analogy, to civilian internees at least, of the Prisoners of War Convention. Furthermore, the creation in 1941 of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, founded on the International Committee's initiative in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies, allowed remarkable work to be done in the field of relief for the civilian populations of occupied territories.

It is inherent in the character of modern warfare that, generally speaking, the only relief activities in behalf of civilians to which belligerents are at all likely to consent, are those destined for categories either wholly, or almost wholly negligible as "war potential", namely children, nursing mothers, old people and the sick.

Reviewing the development of Red Cross activities, especially of the International Committee, we recognize as the common factor the circumstance that they have always been primarily concerned with *war victims who have no part in the actual war effort* — wounded and sick, prisoners of war and other persons deprived of their liberty, children, old people, and so on.

As in its earliest days, so the Red Cross has remained in all the later evolution both of its national and international organisations, essentially a *work of aid* in the widest sense of the term, and first and foremost in time of war. This applies more especially to the International Committee.

3. Red Cross Impartiality

The task of the National Societies is above all *national* in scope. Their aim is primarily to assist their own people; their field is mainly their own national territory, or territories perhaps occupied by their own forces. In obedience to the principle on which the Geneva Convention is founded, National Societies accord to the wounded and sick enemy the same care as to the members of their own armed forces. This is the principle of *impartiality*, which finds its application by analogy also to persons of foreign, even enemy nationality, who are within the field of a National Society's activity, for example, prisoners of war and civilian internees. In the nature of things, however, the chief concern of every national Red Cross Society will always lie in relief activities for its own countrymen.

For the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, however, whose most important, if not exclusive task in wartime is to act as a *neutral intermediary* between opponents for *aid to war victims*, and which, unlike any National Society, has no paramount duty towards its own country, impartiality is the vital and predominating principle. This principle can only find application when based upon strict political neutrality, in complete independence of any national or supra-national, political, social or denominational organization. Impartiality means *service to all, given with equal readiness and without distinction*.

Equal readiness, however, does not necessarily imply *simultaneous* or *equal* aid. Relief schemes vary both as to nature and scope, according to the needs of war victims on either side. During the early years of the recent War, relief undertakings in behalf of the Allies far surpassed those for the benefit of Axis countries, as the latter held a much larger number of prisoners of war and were at that time the only Powers occupying foreign territory. Since the Axis capitulation in 1945, the International Committee's work, apart from tasks in connection with displaced persons and relief to civilian populations in Central and Eastern Europe, has become almost exclusively confined to Axis prisoners of war, especially German.

This task is beset with particular difficulty, due to the absence of any Protecting Power, and to the inability of the home country to send its captive nationals relief supplies of any kind.

For the International Committee a war is an indivisible whole, from its outbreak to its close, that is to say, until all the tasks arising out of the peace treaties and the relief of war victims during the immediate post-war period, have been duly performed.

The services of the International Committee are, in principle, the same for all. They are derived from the terms of the first Geneva Convention, whose demand for equal treatment of all wounded and sick is one which allows of no discrimination whatsoever.

A very large part of the International Committee's undertakings can serve the interests of all parties equally, in fact as well as in principle — as for example, the visiting of prisoner of war camps and the transmissions of news. In this respect, differences can occur only through the varying degrees to which the countries concerned, acting through their military and administrative departments and National Red Cross Societies, endorse and encourage the Committee's work.

The same principle of equal service cannot, as a rule, apply to the important field of material relief.

From the Red Cross standpoint, the ideal condition is *to give all relief solely according to need and urgency*, regardless of the participants in the war, or of political, social or denominational groups, but with discrimination throughout in favour of the sick, children, old people, etc., which is wholly compatible with the principle of equality.

To meet the unprecedented financial requirements connected with the supply of food, clothing and medical relief to prisoners of war or civilian populations, the International Committee is dependent upon donations from Red Cross Societies and other welfare agencies, and from Governments. It administers these funds as trustee and intermediary for relief to prisoners of war, internees or deportees of a given country, or to the civilian population of an enemy-occupied territory. Donations had, therefore, to be applied *according to the donors' wishes*, a large

part of the funds furnished by them — especially by National Red Cross Societies — having been contributed by their national public for specific purposes. Had the International Committee accepted only such gifts for war relief as could be distributed strictly according to need, the greater part of its work for prisoners of war and internees, at any rate in the field of material aid, as well as that of the Joint Relief Commission for civilian populations, would not have been possible at all.

The Committee did, however, seek the donors' consent to the giving of more or less proportionate relief to the prisoners of various nationalities — to those at least belonging to the same group of nations. It is true that in the post-war period large donations in money and kind have been made available to the Joint Relief Commission, at its free disposal, but in value these represent only a small part of the gifts intended by the donors for specified beneficiaries (about a hundred million out of a total of 350 to 400 million francs).

The obligation to observe donors' stipulations often led to very great *inequalities in the aid* afforded to various categories of war victims, even within the same group of belligerents. But where no other possible intermediary between donors and recipients exists, the Red Cross cannot make itself responsible for refusing an offer of assistance on the sole grounds that the same help is needed just as much, if not more, in some other place. *Relief to war victims overrides all other considerations.* The impartiality of the Red Cross suffers no prejudice so long as the latter's services, when required *de jure* or *de facto*, are made available to all donors and to all categories of beneficiaries. In such conditions, the Red Cross can act as intermediary for gifts not only in favour of specified nationalities, but also for other groups, selected for denominational or racial reasons. Such was, for instance, the relief sent at a certain time to distressed Jewish communities in certain East European countries.

When donors are anxious to send relief to categories of sufferers who are chosen according to standards other than extreme distress, and when other intermediaries are available, the Red Cross must confine itself to relief schemes which are strictly in accordance with Red Cross principles.

At the same time, however, the encouragement of all relief undertakings that pursue non-political aims both in war and post-war times, will always be an obligation for the Red Cross as a whole, and for the International Committee in particular.

The highest degree of assistance, coupled with strict observance of the principle of impartiality (taken not only as equal readiness to lend aid to all parties, but as equal consideration of all needs of like kind and degree of urgency) — such is the object which the International Committee must keep in view in all its work for war victims. In concrete situations, notably that of war, its foremost endeavour must be to harmonise as far as possible observance of principles with material possibilities of relief.

A relief scheme does not gain specifically Red Cross character from the mere fact that a Red Cross organisation is linked to it as donor or intermediary agent, but only if it springs from a self-dedicated, all-embracing will to aid, free from ulterior motives, direct or indirect, and guided by the sole consideration of human distress. With such a purpose and in such a spirit the Red Cross may accept in principle whatever co-operation is offered ¹.

4. Respect of Law and of Red Cross Principles

Parallel with its functions as promoter of humanitarian undertakings and as neutral intermediary between belligerents in war-time, the Committee also assumes the *duty* of upholding *the basic principles of the Red Cross*, of receiving *complaints concerning alleged breaches of the Conventions*, and of dealing

¹ This formulation of the principle of impartiality differs somewhat from the statement made at the International Red Cross Conference in London, 1938, in which the Committee alluded especially to its attitude during the Spanish Civil War. The disparity between the two statements is explained by the special circumstances of the former occasion. In that Civil War neither party had made funds available to the Committee for aid to members of its fighting forces in the adversary's hands; these prisoners did however receive assistance from partisans of either side having direct access to one zone or the other.

Such donations as the Committee received, whether earmarked or not, were distributed as evenly as possible between both sides, for the forces of parties approximately equal in strength.

with such *problems as require handling by a neutral organisation.*

For ensuring observance of the laws which protect humanitarian interests, more especially the international agreements relative to Red Cross work, we must distinguish between :

- (a) Measures taken by the Committee *by its own motion* in line with its activities arising out of the Geneva Convention and cognate agreements, and following upon cases brought to its knowledge either by its own delegates or through official channels.
- (b) Measures by the Committee due to appeal *from the outside*, generally from the alleged victims of the breach of law, or from would-be defenders of violated law and humanitarian principles.

Turning to interventions of the first kind, the Committee has made hundreds, even thousands, of these, during the past six years alone, ranging from delegates' talks with camp commanders to notes addressed to the highest government departments, in cases of special gravity. Interventions of this kind, in order to restore any law transgressed or threatened with infringement and to prevent future breaches, are occasionally prompted by complaints received from private persons, when their information appears to be reliable. If the breaches persist they are usually brought to the attention of the adverse party.

In making representations of this kind, the Committee employs the firm and moderate terms which appear best calculated to produce the desired result. For this same reason, such dealings are given publicity only in the rarest cases, a practice

During the Abyssinian War, the Committee at once offered its services to both parties, but only the Ethiopian government accepted. This relief undertaking never gave rise to criticism, one-sided though it necessarily remained throughout that war.

Equally free from criticism was the Committee's work for both belligerent parties during the recent war, when it was for years so unequal in scope and extent. Neither on one side nor the other did that circumstance ever arouse objections on the grounds of a breach of impartiality. Indeed, no such objection could be maintained, from the standpoint of international law, since the Fourth Hague Convention and the Geneva Convention relative to Prisoners of War both admit relief to this category of war-victims, without any kind of restrictions with a view to parity.

which, generally speaking, has proved its worth. Where the Committee meets with opposition, public protest would not only fail in its purpose, but would doubtless destroy in the country concerned all prospects of other services that remain still possible ; such action would therefore be positively harmful.

Interventions by the Committee of the second kind comprise both enquiries into breaches of law, and the transmission of protests. If impartiality in the sense of universal readiness to aid is an essential Red Cross feature, the non-political character of the institution demands that its impartiality shall be exercised also *in the sense of true justice*, when such is possible.

Accordingly, at the outbreak of the War, the Committee issued and made known both to governments and to the general public the only conditions upon which it was ready, in obedience to the Conventions and to Red Cross principles, to undertake or participate in *enquiries into alleged violations* of the humanitarian interests protected by international law. Contradictory procedure, allowing all parties to state their case, alone offers any prospect of elucidating the true facts ; the Committee therefore acts in cases of alleged violation only with the consent of all parties.

Protests made by National Societies, or in exceptional cases by Governments, are forwarded by the Committee without comment to the Red Cross or Government of the indicted country ; a request is added that the responsible authorities examine the matter and enable the Committee to convey a satisfactory reply to the adverse party. This procedure has rarely elicited explanations which were satisfactory from the protesting party's point of view ; it has never resulted in any agreement for a joint and impartial enquiry, in the sense of Article 30 of the Geneva Convention. It should also be noted that some Governments maintain that the Protecting Power alone has authority to transmit protests to Governments, and decline to entertain those forwarded by the Committee, either direct or through the National Red Cross Society.

A very anxious problem for the International Committee arises in this connexion. On receiving trustworthy information as to grave violations of international law or of human rights,

ought the International Committee, of its own initiative, to raise public protest ?

There are three reasons why the Committee did not accept this idea.

In the first place, every protest is a judgment. No impartial judgment is possible unless the conviction reached is based on exact and certain knowledge of the circumstances. This involves an impartial enquiry, hardly ever feasible in war-time.

Secondly, the indicted party will either keep its own public in ignorance of the protest, or present it in one-sided fashion, whilst the opposing side will be free to use it for purposes of propaganda. In every case the indicted party will demand to know why similar genuine or alleged breaches by the adversary have not called forth similar protests. Should the Committee adopt the method of public protest, it would inevitably be forced more and more into taking a definite stand with regard to all kinds of acts of war, and even of political matters. It must also measure all the consequences of this policy, not only as affecting its position in relation to governments, but also its possibilities of humanitarian action, the safeguarding of which is, in the last analysis, its sole concern.

Thirdly, the Committee's considered view, on the grounds of past experience, is that public protests are not only ineffectual, but are apt to produce a stiffening of the indicted country's attitude with regard to the Committee, even the rupture of relations with it. There would thus be a serious risk of sacrificing concrete relief work in behalf of all war victims to the defence of a legal principle.

These are therefore the circumstances which the International Committee has to consider in determining the question : Which is the more important, to sit in judgment and enunciate principles, or to afford relief and put the said principles into practice ?

The Committee has been compelled to give precedence to the practical work of relief. The Red Cross is essentially a work of aid, not an international tribunal ; its decisions must be made in full consciousness of its responsibilities towards the men and women whom it is able — and perhaps alone able — to succour.

5. The Humanitarian Task of the Red Cross in its relation to War and Injustice

The relation of Red Cross work to war and injustice gives rise to frequent criticism and misunderstanding.

Why does the Red Cross confine itself to caring for war victims, only a proportion of whom it can reach at best, instead of devoting all its energies to the prevention of war? ¹

This is the kind of thing one often hears. To put the question is to show a complete misunderstanding of Dunant's idea, in which the entire movement had its source. The attempt to eliminate war is one thing; to help its victims when it does occur, is another. Certainly, the men and women who work for the Red Cross should also join in the supreme task of establishing permanent peace, but even whilst pursuing this exalted aim, they must remember that the work of Red Cross organisations must be safeguarded against the possibility, however remote, that war may again break out.

So long as war can still be waged within the compass of international law, so long as men are wounded in combat and taken prisoner, the Red Cross need never doubt its right to develop its works of aid. In case, however, of illegal acts — members of the enemy nation taken as hostages, deported and imprisoned without trial of any sort — we may ask whether our foremost duty is not to protest against the illegality of such proceedings and to endeavour to have such measures rescinded. Here again, measures contrary to the laws of warfare must, like war itself, be considered by the International Committee primarily in the sense of *existing facts*, just as the doctor to whom the sick and wounded are brought turns his attention first to the injury or disease, without going into the human guilt which may be its cause. The Red Cross, above all a work of aid, must first strive to bring *relief* to these victims

¹ This question was put as early as 1869. See *Bulletin international des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge*. No 1, 1869, p. 3, and the writer's paper in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, 1940, p. 284, "La Croix-Rouge et la prévention de la guerre".

of war, as to all others. We refer to what we have already said on the subject of protests.

6. Humanity and Law

The foundation of Red Cross work in general and that of the International Committee in particular, is the respect for the human person — a principle independent of all written legislative statutes.

Nevertheless, the *relation of humanity and law* is of the highest importance to the activities of the International Committee; it is significant that from its foundation, the Red Cross idea found its expression in an international treaty. Since then, the Geneva Convention has been improved and extended; it forms the starting point for a system of international law which aims at protecting humanitarian interests in war and is embodied notably in the Hague Conventions.

The existence of such a juridical system greatly facilitates the task of the Red Cross and of its national and international organisations, even though the latter have only slight direct mention, as yet, in international treaties. For the International Committee it is of particular value that at least its right to humanitarian initiative is expressly recognised in the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War.

Where, as in the above-mentioned agreement, the ruling is both thorough and satisfactory, the Committee cannot demand more of governments than the *precise and liberal implementing of the agreement*. Unlike the Protecting Powers, however, the Committee does not represent the interests of any one State and of its nationals in relation with any other belligerent State, but is the advocate of every war victim, considered simply as a human being. It is therefore able to approach Governments with suggestions for useful amendments to existing agreements and with proposals to implement unratified agreements, or draft conventions, or even to introduce entirely new rulings based

on mutual and informal concessions. It is one of the International Committee's important tasks to take the lead in introducing *new international rules* that are adapted to *new circumstances* as they arise. In the recent War, several achievements stand to its credit in this field: concessions in favour of civilian internees, civilian messages, conveyance of relief supplies to prisoners of war and the consequent creation of a Red Cross maritime transport service, care of war-stricken populations in occupied territories, to mention only these.

Because the International Committee bases its activity primarily not on the law of nations, but on the natural law of the human being, its constant endeavour is to maintain and extend its work in behalf of all victims of war, or of situations resembling war, *even where no rules of international law exist* (as in civil wars); further, where such rules are called in question, either because the parties refuse to recognise each other as legally constituted, or because one of them becomes incapacitated through capitulation.

7. Universality of the International Committee's Activity

Implicit in the International Committee's essential impartiality is the universal character of its work. Universality means that an offer of service applies with unconditional equality to all the parties to a war, and that when all do not equally accept, every opportunity is seized to repeat the offer.

The Committee's universality is not impaired by the fact that one party or the other declines to accept its good offices. Free and reciprocal consent, untainted by coercion of any kind, is the basis of Red Cross practice. The Committee's effective performance may be open to criticism, never its universal readiness to work for all.

Since its work depends for the most part upon the reciprocal interests of two parties, the Committee must endeavour to secure universal acceptance, for every gap caused by one State's refusal is liable to affect all other States indirectly.

Universality does not only mean an attempt to embrace all countries without exception, but also readiness to serve as neutral intermediary for humanitarian purposes in every conflict having the character of war, in all countries and between adversaries of every category.

Universality is, in the last resort, an expression of the fact that Red Cross work is concerned with the human being, considered as an integral part of all humanity, but a part whose inherent value lies beyond dispute.

8. Non-Political Character of the Red Cross

Both the impartiality, which is the special characteristic of the International Committee's task, and the peculiar nature of the Red Cross as a relief institution, make it essential that the Committee should keep its activities *untouched by politics of any kind*, whether of States or parties, classes, races, creeds or ideologies, and unaffected by moral judgments as to the persons who are to be helped, or those with whom relations must be maintained. The necessary relations of confidence which the Committee is anxious to maintain with Governments and Red Cross Societies must be safeguarded at all costs, but solely with a view to the execution of humanitarian tasks.

It is conceivable that in the eyes of one belligerent an undertaking of a purely humanitarian character may not be without political, military or moral by-effects. This may occur, for instance, when relief for an occupied country is envisaged, since this invariably raises the question of a breach in the economic blockade decreed by one belligerent against another. But the fact that humanitarian interests may find themselves in opposition to political, economic and military interests, must never deter the Committee from using means put at its disposal to carry out every relief scheme it may consider useful and necessary. Since this can be done only *in agreement with all the belligerent States* within whose bounds, or across whose territory the Committee must work, there can be no question of prejudice to any country's interests. No part of the

work is done secretly, and consent, or at any rate tolerance on the part of the Government in question, gives the action legal sanction, as far as the Committee is concerned.

9. Open Dealing and Fairness

The principle of *open dealing* and *fairness* towards the belligerent parties is observed at all times by the International Committee, and stands in direct relation to the complete absence of any political attachments.

Open dealing means activity carried out with the full acquiescence, or at least the tolerance of the authorities concerned, throughout the territories where the Committee and its representatives operate. It further implies that the Committee's delegates and other representatives pursue no activity other than that which is expressly allowed or tolerated.

Fairness rules out every resort to underhand methods, such as secrecy and dissimulation, even where their use might serve the highest interests of humanity. Even towards persons and institutions whose unreserved frankness cannot be certainly assumed, the Committee's policy must remain the same.

10. The Financing of the Committee's Work

Certain questions of principle arise in this connection.

If it seems feasible, as it is certainly desirable, to place the Committee upon a basis of financial stability, independent of annual voluntary contributions. It can only be so in normal times. In any major war, it is wholly impossible to guarantee the Committee's activities in advance, so unpredictable in kind and unforeseeable in scope do requirements then become.

During the second, as in the first World War, the cost of the International Committee's work had to be met by special contributions from the Swiss people, the Swiss Confederation, as well as Governments and Red Cross Societies, particularly those of the countries at war. The allocation of this financial

burden followed no plan of any kind, nor did the Conventions provide any point of reference.

The International Committee had to keep two ends in view.

(a) To find as ample funds as possible for the financing of its tasks over the entire war and post-war period, such tasks to include both those assigned by tradition or the terms of international Conventions, and others, self-appointed or assumed on request, as changing circumstances demand.

By the above funds are meant the sums required to maintain the Committee's departments at the proper level of efficiency, not monies to be transformed into relief supplies in behalf of third parties.

(b) To maintain its independence in respect of contributors towards its support, that being essential to the execution of its task under its own responsibility and in obedience to Red Cross principles. This end could be achieved, since rather more than half of all donations for general expenses came from Switzerland, and the remainder mainly from belligerent countries, without any single donation of exceptional size to disturb the balance in favour of any one party or country, as against the rest. Furthermore, the donors laid no claim to interfere in the Committee's administrative concerns, nor did they expect any financial supervision other than the balance sheets made accessible to the general public.

The Committee could not see its way to accepting payment by the parties concerned of the cost of single relief operations, nor did it render separate accounts for such expenditure, as they cannot rightly be isolated from the rest, nearly all the Committee's activities in the various countries being closely interdependent. This reservation did not, however, prevent certain Governments and Red Cross Societies from increasing their general contributions, to enable the Committee to carry out particular schemes. The Committee meets the costs of its work out of its total revenues ; in principle, it gives its services free, that is to say, without asking compensation in proportion to services rendered, or even any compensation at all. Owing to

war-time legislation governing the transfer of currency, millions of next of kin who benefited by the Committee's services, were debarred from making any voluntary contribution whatever towards its general funds during the second World War, as had been customary during the War of 1914-1918.

The principle of gratuitous service was waived only in respect of cable charges incurred on behalf of governments or private donors, and the costs of transporting relief supplies. In the latter case, a levy proportionate to the weight of shipments and the Committee's net expenses was collected, but this left no margin for reserve.

Thus, at the end of the War, the Committee is just as poor as it was at the beginning. It has adhered strictly to the principle of complete financial altruism, even at the risk of sacrificing its own future interests. As a result of this policy it found itself in 1945, and again in 1946, compelled to seek aid from the Swiss Confederation and from National Red Cross Societies, failing which its work for war victims and prisoners of war in particular, would have come to a premature close. The Committee's own experience and the comparison with other organizations with which it has cooperated, have led it to the firm conviction that, in the interests of the Red Cross and of its own work and staff, the International Committee should be able to constitute reserves sufficient to ensure its uninterrupted service, even in circumstances financially unfavourable and subject to changes impossible to forecast. Any balance from such reserves would be applied, in obedience to Red Cross principles, to some related activity at the Committee's discretion, provided no other arrangements had been concluded with the donors.

11. Peace-Time Work

The principles set forth in the preceding pages determined the International Committee's work in the recent War, and will also hold good in similar circumstances in the future.

To serve these principles in its *peace-time activities* also, is one of the Committee's essential duties.

The first of these duties is mindfulness of the *spiritual basis of Red Cross work*, which means application of the Red Cross ideal to unforeseen problems and its relations to other currents of thought. This task is pursued through constant exchange of views with the National Red Cross Societies.

Similarly, one of the Committee's foremost concerns is to cooperate with Governments and National Societies in the *development of international law for the protection of humanitarian interests, especially in time of war*.

Defence of the principles of humanity in war is, however, largely dependent upon the degree to which these principles are rooted in the moral consciousness of the individual in time of peace.

It is therefore incumbent upon Red Cross organisations in peace-time to seize every opportunity of proclaiming the ideals upon which their work is founded. They will employ every means of inculcating into young minds, especially through the international organisations concerned with the education of youth, a high conception of service to humanity as a whole and to the individual in particular.

(B). FOUNDATIONS

1. The Right of Initiative

The express recognition given in the Conventions to the International Committee's work in time of war, is scant indeed. Only in the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War (Art. 79) is mention to be found of the Committee's right to propose the establishment of a Central Prisoner of War Agency, in a neutral country, with a clause to the effect that this stipulation "shall not be interpreted as restricting the humanitarian work of the International Red Cross Committee". Article 88 of the same instrument reiterates this idea in connection with the provisions for supervising the application of the Convention.

This *right of initiative* for humanitarian purposes is the recognition of a *tradition*, that of service begun by the International Committee in 1864 and since steadily developed, mainly on the basis of the revised Geneva Convention of 1906 and the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907. Beyond these agreements, work on this basis in the first World War gave rise to new rules of international law, derived from general practice, and largely embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1929¹. The Committee made still further advances in this direction during the war years 1939-1945.

Recognition of the right to initiative should be carefully distinguished from the *implementing of this right*. For the latter, each particular case requires the *consent of the States concerned*, — first of all, of the State in whose territory the Committee is anxious to work, and normally also, of the State for whose nationals its service is destined. As a rule, this consent can only be obtained on the assumption of reciprocity, since most of the Committee's work is done in behalf of persons in territory governed by their own country's enemy.

Thus, immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the International Committee offered its services to all the belligerents, using the same procedure each time a new belligerent entered the conflict.

Almost without exception, the Powers thus approached returned affirmative replies. In point of fact, consent is given only when, and as long as, the Powers expect to *benefit* by the Committee's activities, and in so far as they are prepared to place *confidence* in its exclusively humanitarian purpose. Where belligerents see no likelihood of reciprocal advantage, it is hardly possible to obtain the necessary consent of both sides. But the consent once granted was successfully maintained, even after the capitulation of the Axis Powers, when the prisoners of one party only remained to be cared for.

Securing a general consent, despite its importance, is only a first step. Relief work is for the most part impracticable unless

¹ Convention relative to Sick and Wounded (1864, revised in 1906 and 1929); Convention relative to Prisoners of War (1929).

the Committee can send its delegates into and through belligerent territory, and this is only possible if they, or other representatives, are approved by the governments concerned and given all the necessary permits. Thus, at every turn the Committee is dependent upon the goodwill of belligerent Powers, and in many cases also of neutral governments.

Lastly, the granting of all such facilities is purely optional and discretionary. It is in the nature of things that there can be no claim in law in this respect, yet a principle of humanitarian law is clearly present and only awaits application. The whole of the Committee's practical work in war-time rests upon the balance of the belligerents' reciprocal interests, on informal concessions voluntarily granted by belligerents to the Committee, and upon the latter's ability to carry out the task it has assumed and to keep the confidence of the governments concerned.

It should be regarded as quite remarkable that so vast an undertaking could stand and prosper for so many years on so slender a foundation, and in the overcharged atmosphere of any conflict, especially of such as existed during the second World War. The only explanation lies in the fact that countless persons all over the world—members of Red Cross Societies, governments, armed forces and the public in general—have been active supporters of the Red Cross idea. The Committee believes this fact to be further evidence of the necessity and moral justification of a neutral and wholly independent intermediary for humanitarian activities in time of war.

The above considerations regarding the foundation of the Committee's work make us realise the greatness of the responsibility vested in this organization. In taking any step, the Committee must aim, first and foremost, at securing and maintaining the active cooperation of the parties concerned, for such cooperation is purely voluntary and often granted only on the strength of the reciprocity observed by the enemy.

The conditional character and interdependence of relief undertakings are often complex, and demand much careful thought and prudence. If the International Committee is led by such considerations to take certain steps in preference to

others, its only concern is the possibility of maximum relief, its sole anxiety being to help human beings in distress.

Whoever makes demands of it should consider that the Committee itself can make no demands at all. It can only labour ceaselessly to obtain the preliminary consent which is indispensable for its undertakings.

2. Perpetual Neutrality of Switzerland

The second preliminary condition for the Committee's activity is the *perpetual neutrality of Switzerland*, on whose territory the institution is established and from whose citizens its members are recruited.

It is certainly possible and necessary to act in the spirit of Red Cross impartiality, even on the soil of countries at war and in the actual war zones: such is precisely the *raison d'être* of the Geneva Convention. But, for practical, political and psychological reasons, contact between belligerents for the purpose of relief action can only be established from neutral territory, and through the agency of persons whom neither party can regard as nationals of an enemy, or enemy-occupied country.

What Switzerland's military or political fate in any future war may be, none can foretell. There is one fact, however, which is confirmed by a long political tradition: Switzerland — and we mean thereby the solid and overwhelming majority of the Swiss people — holds fast to the irrevocable political axiom of its neutrality. It will do so as long as this is humanly possible, with no thought of yielding to any momentary consideration of political expediency of any kind. The fact that the International Committee was founded eighty-four years ago in Switzerland, where its headquarters have always been, and that it selects its members exclusively from Swiss citizens, acquires thereby justification which far transcends the mere historic genesis of the Red Cross.

Thanks to this long tradition and the assured support of an entire people, the Committee was able to assemble the large

staff of experienced and skilled assistants and the thousands of devoted workers of all grades who were needed for the execution of the extensive and manifold duties that fell to its share during two World Wars, the second far surpassing the first in the vastness of its operations.

If the Committee was invariably in a position to make its decisions in full harmony with the Red Cross spirit and with the speed and adaptability which constantly changing conditions and extreme urgency demanded, this was due in very large part to its complete independence of all political and administrative control by the Swiss Confederation. Although the Federal Government has always shown entire readiness to assist the Committee, not only financially, but also by the granting of diplomatic passports for its missions, and by other similar facilities, this has never been at the price of concessions. The manner in which the Committee is composed, namely by co-opting of members unconnected with any outside authority and citizens of one small neutral country, has been another decisive element in the rapid and independent execution of its duties.

The International Committee has always been mindful of the fact that activities similar to its own can be, and are undertaken by *neutral countries other* than Switzerland, and has warmly welcomed these parallel undertakings, wherever they have appeared. In the very considerable relief action for Greece, to which the *Turkish Red Crescent* gave the first impetus, *co-operation* by the Committee with *other neutral Red Cross Societies*, and particularly with the *Swedish Government* and the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies was of peculiar importance. Further, without *neutral bases* for Red Cross maritime transport provided by *Portugal and Sweden*, the relief actions for prisoners of war and civil populations in occupied territories would never have been possible.

Unlike the War of 1914-1918, that of 1939-1945 found Switzerland surrounded for a long period by territories under the military control of belligerents belonging to a single group of Powers. As a natural consequence, contact with the Allies was more difficult than with the Axis Powers. All the move-

ments of the International Committee's envoys leaving Switzerland hung upon the readiness of one sole group of belligerents to grant permits of exit and entry. Similarly, all parcels and correspondence to and from Geneva were subject to the goodwill of the censorship authorities of the same group.

It must in justice be admitted that this situation never brought the Committee's work to a standstill, though it certainly occasioned delay. Privacy of correspondence has no great importance for the Committee; since its work is exclusively humanitarian, it has no need of secrecy. Nevertheless, the encirclement of Switzerland by the Axis involved a serious drawback in that simultaneous negotiations at Geneva with representatives of both sides, which had been practicable and fruitful in the first World War, though by no means wholly excluded in the second, were much more difficult to bring about.

Wireless telegraphy, for which the Swiss departments concerned granted the Committee generous facilities, went far towards mitigating Switzerland's military isolation, with consequent benefit to the Committee.

The failure of certain undertakings in the Pacific zone was due less to the geographic factor than to the negative attitude of Japan. Neutral bases in those regions, had all the parties agreed to them, would often have proved of very great advantage. The Committee's efforts to secure such bases were unfortunately of no avail.

3. Differences in Relations between Belligerents

For the International Committee's work, the most favourable situation is that in which *normal relations based on international law exist between all participants* in a war, that is to say, when there is mutual recognition of a status of belligerency and — more important still — when both parties are bound by the *same international agreements concerning the laws of warfare*. In the late War, this was the case at the outset, the situation from the juridical standpoint being clear and uniform.

Later on, as other belligerents not signatory to the same Conventions entered the war, the Committee sought to obtain their governments' consent to the informal application, subject to reciprocity, of the Conventions, particularly of that relative to Prisoners of War.

Negotiations to this effect with Japan succeeded in principle, but the result proved unsatisfactory in practice.

Generally speaking, the rules of international law are implemented only on the basis of reciprocity. Practical success depends, however, not only on legal reciprocity, but also on one national interest balancing with the other. Reciprocity in this sense may rest upon interest unlike in kind, but existing at the same moment ; for instance, during the early years of the recent conflict, when the Allies' main concern was for their prisoners of war, and the Axis Powers' anxiety for their civil internees.

The fact that until the year 1944, enemy or originally neutral territory was occupied by Axis Powers only, threw the balance of the situation on both sides so far out that the Committee could at first do only very little, and that little only very gradually, to aid the population of such territories. Its efforts to secure the temporary application of the Tokyo Draft—*i.e.* the Draft Convention relative to Civilians drawn up by the Committee and adopted by the Red Cross Conference at Tokyo in 1934—were rejected by almost all the belligerents, with an only exception in favour of civilian internees, properly so called.

A further obstacle to the Committee's endeavours arises when the parties to a conflict *refuse each other recognition as States*. This may occur when one belligerent has totally occupied the enemy country and considers it as no longer existent, further, when a government has had to seek refuge on allied soil, or again when fresh combatant forces, and perhaps new governmental authorities arise in occupied territory, or in the unoccupied areas of a country which has capitulated. Faced with such exceptionally varied situations, which the conflicting parties consider not from a legal and debatable point of view, but in a political context, the International Committee can but regard these hostile relations as *de facto* existent, and

attempt to obtain recognition for humanitarian interests, even in such abnormal conditions. The question of either party's legitimacy cannot then be entertained. Situations such as these have some resemblance to civil war; and success depends upon the practical interest the parties take in the Committee's services. A further condition will be the necessary prudence displayed by the neutral intermediary who ventures between warring parties, one of whom denies the legitimacy of the other.

4. International and Internal Relations

The work of the Red Cross, as conceived by its founders, confirmed and guaranteed already by the first Geneva Convention, bears reference to *international relations*. This applies equally to relief activities in behalf of prisoners of war and of civilians in enemy hands. That which, from the standpoint of governments, is mutual regulation of national interests for the protection of their citizens, constitutes from the standpoint of the Red Cross *quâ* institution, regulation for the protection of the individual person's life and human dignity. Regarded from the humanitarian angle, there is no fundamental difference between *international* and *national or internal* relations. The extensive welfare activities which National Red Cross Societies already undertake in peace-time, regardless of political, social and religious considerations, have the individual human being as their object. The problem of impartiality towards friend and foe cannot therefore possibly arise.

Occasionally, in peace-time, the International Committee is asked to protect humanitarian interests by acting in behalf of persons under duress. Where persons of foreign nationality are involved, their own government—contrary to wartime practice—is alone competent and authorised to act in their defence. Quite different is the case of persons whose own government treats them with inhumanity, or of stateless individuals having no adequate protection.

The demands of humanity must never yield to the principle of the sovereign State, which claims the right to settle its own

internal affairs without any kind of outside interference. It is, however, just as clear that intervention in such conditions not only encounters a well-nigh insuperable obstacle, namely, the principle of national sovereignty, but is shorn of the argument of mutual interest, which international relations bring into play.

Thus, it stands to reason that in war-time the International Committee, whose legitimate activity as neutral intermediary is wholly dependent on the goodwill of the belligerents concerned, can still less embark on any interference in the strictly national concerns of any country without exposing its normal work to the gravest risk.

This raises the problem, to what extent the representatives of the Red Cross idea are able to contribute towards the safeguarding of human rights as such, by means of a system of laws that shall be binding upon governments.

5. Co-operation

The International Committee, as the Red Cross organisation which in 1863 started a world-wide movement based on a system of national central committees, is naturally anxious to keep in the closest possible touch with all *National Red Cross Societies*, both in time of war and of peace, and to be of service to them, especially in the capacity of neutral liaison between Societies whose direct relations with one another are severed in war-time.

This contact, notably with the National Societies of the belligerent countries, became particularly close in the late War, wherever the tasks of these Societies came within the International Committee's field of action.

Relations with the Red Cross Societies were kept up partly by special missions, but chiefly through the Committee's delegations in many countries and also through the representatives of several Societies who were accredited at Geneva. In spite of such delegations from either side, direct contact between the heads of National Societies and of the International Committee is of course indispensable in all matters of general significance or particular importance.

The International Committee would not have been in a position to fulfil its task as promoter or as neutral intermediary in humanitarian matters, even within the scope of the Geneva Conventions, had it not enjoyed direct access to *Governments*. The implementing of the Conventions rests almost entirely with the State authorities, especially the military or civil departments responsible for prisoners of war, and the medical services. Above all, Governments are alone competent to facilitate the introduction into international law of rules hitherto unknown or not yet applied.

In so far as the Committee's external relations did not consist in written applications or in special missions from Geneva to responsible government authorities, they were maintained through delegations accredited to National Red Cross Societies. Governments, on the other hand, made use of their diplomatic or consular representatives in Berne or Geneva for contacts with the Committee's headquarters.

The Committee's external relations cannot, however, be restricted to National Red Cross Societies and to Governments. It must seek every possible contact and support which may be of use in the fulfilment of duties arising out of its mandates, or which it assumes on its own initiative. Its relief undertakings in behalf of civilian populations, for example owed a great deal to private or semi-official organisations, which either made available the necessary funds and supplies, or else gave indispensable co-operation in the countries for which the relief was intended. The range of the Committee's relations outside National Red Cross Societies and Governments is limited only by the practical scope of the aid to war victims which such relations may render possible at any given time, and by the observance of the principle of impartiality which governs all Red Cross work.

6. Parallel Activities

The Committee pursues its task alongside parallel actions by Governments, Red Cross Societies and other welfare associations.

As regards the Prisoners of War Convention, supervisory powers in respect of the manner of its application are expressly vested by treaty law in the *Protecting Powers*. Nevertheless, the possibility of corresponding action by the International Committee is also formally recognised.

In actual fact, the Committee has been able, in almost all cases, to carry out its relief work not only for prisoners of war, but also for other categories, in cooperation with Protecting Powers. Occasionally, however, a belligerent has attempted to debar or hamper the work of Committee's delegations by contending that the Protecting Power's representatives were already performing the same services. The Committee was, however, able to obtain recognition of its competency in this field. The parallel action of Protecting Power and Committee has proved useful everywhere, owing to the immensity of the tasks to be accomplished. Even the simultaneous transmission of prisoner of war lists to the Protecting Powers and to the Committee's Central Agency turned out to be both useful and desirable. The transmission of names by cable, which became necessary at the later stages of the war, was the Committee's sole concern.

Despite partial overlapping, the functions of the Protecting Power are fundamentally dissimilar in kind and extent. The Protecting Power is the mandatory of one or both belligerents, with competency to protect the rights and interests of the States from which it derives authority. The Committee is concerned exclusively with humanitarian tasks; its functions are not limited to those which are guaranteed by law, but embrace such enterprises in the interests of humanity as appear essential, or which are justified through a request made by a belligerent.

In cases where no Protecting Power exists—in particular since the capitulation of the Axis Powers—the International Committee has generally attempted to fill the breach as a substitute. Such action, though always strictly in connection with non-political affairs, has extended to fields where the Protecting Power only had functioned hitherto, as for instance with regard to penal or civil litigation in which prisoners of war are involved.

Further possible activities parallel to the Committee's are those of the *neutral Red Cross Societies*, already mentioned. To these must be added the work of the *Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross*. In the sense of Art. IX of the Hague Statutes, the Committee invited the *League of Red Cross Societies* to associate in the prosecution of relief activities in behalf of civil populations. To this effect, an autonomous managing organisation, with separate legal status, was created under the direction of the Committee and the League. This Joint Commission, whose general report will be published separately, did most valuable work in the field of relief, and should, in the Committee's opinion, have pursued it during the post-war period, so long as the mandates received were sufficiently numerous to demonstrate its usefulness and ensure its financial stability. In all the undertakings of the Joint Commission, the active co-operation of a strictly neutral body such as the Committee was of vital importance, in negotiations with belligerents and in supervising the work of distribution, which devolved on the Committee's delegates.

The *Foundation for Red Cross Maritime Transports* was called into being in 1941 by the Committee, which also nominated its managing board. In conveying relief supplies by sea for prisoners of war, internees and civil populations, the Foundation rendered signal service both to the Committee and to the Joint Relief Commission.

Other activities sometimes parallel to those of the Committee were carried out by a number of *institutions of international scope*, mainly in the field of *intellectual, moral and spiritual relief*. In that field the Committee confined itself to assisting these organisations by introducing their delegates to belligerents, or by facilitating the transport of their consignments to prisoners of war. With a view to effective service and cooperation among other organisations dealing with intellectual and moral relief, the Committee set up a joint co-ordinating body, over which it presided. The issue to prisoners of war and internees of books for recreation and study was taken over by the Committee for countries to which it alone had access, or where donors particularly desired its assistance. On the other hand, the

Committee made over to these organisations certain of its specific tasks—e.g. the forwarding of relief supplies—wherever, (as notably in the case of the Y.M.C.A.), these agencies could give that practical help which was beyond the Committee's powers, in a particular country or in some special circumstance.

7. Personnel

The recruiting and composition of its personnel is a matter of great importance for the Committee, in view of the peculiar conditions to which its whole work is subject. Its main difficulty in this connection is that, to a far greater extent than with any National Red Cross Society, the International Committee's war-time tasks, particularly in the case of a World War, grow out of all proportion to the institution's normal peace-time dimensions. Between 1939 and 1945 the Committee's expenditure increased one hundredfold, while the volume of incoming and outgoing mail became a thousand times greater.

The rapid increase of demands made on the Committee from the summer of 1940 onward could only be met by the enrolment of *voluntary workers*. At first in Geneva only, but later in thirty-three auxiliary branches of the Central Agency set up in various towns of Switzerland, the Swiss people gave proof of the most admirable helpfulness. In the first year of the War, three-quarters of the staff were unpaid, towards the end, about one-half.

The Red Cross movement as created by Dunant was essentially a grouping of voluntary workers—volunteer auxiliaries on the battlefield, volunteer helpers in the Central Committees of the various countries. The International Committee too, from its beginnings to the present day, has maintained in its membership the principle of honorary and unremunerated service.

Strict adherence to this principle encounters serious difficulties, however, when the work stretches out over a very long period, or when it requires expert knowledge. As the cost of living increased and general living conditions became more and more difficult, unremunerated work in the Committee's service

involved ever increasing sacrifices. Even nominal allowances could not meet the situation for long, and such inadequate remuneration soon appeared unjustifiable from a social point of view. For this reason, the Committee was led to employ a growing proportion of paid assistants, to adjust its scale of remuneration more or less to the rising costs of living, and to follow the practice of other employers with regard to insurance, bonuses, etc. By reason of the Committee's limited resources, this policy had the effect of steadily diminishing the gap between the lower-grade salaries and those of the higher responsible officials.

The Committee's activities must not only be directed from a neutral country, but must also be carried out by persons of *neutral nationality*. As a rule, *Swiss workers* have been engaged, chiefly because almost no others were available in the country, and because enough Swiss were found abroad. The Committee was, however, always ready to take other neutrals into its service, if they had more prospect of being acceptable abroad than Swiss. Citizens of belligerent nations were only engaged in Geneva on account of special indispensable qualifications, such as familiarity with other languages. Others were accepted who were of Swiss origin and whose long-standing connexion with Switzerland ensured that they would work in a spirit of neutrality. These foreign assistants did their work in full consciousness of their special responsibility towards the Committee.

Amongst those in the Committee's service, the delegates abroad deserve special mention. These men and women have to face tasks of particular difficulty and responsibility, their activity being exercised at a distance from executive headquarters in Geneva. Life in a belligerent country in any case often involves much hardship : many of the delegates have had to serve for months and even years consecutively in areas exposed to almost constant risk of bombing. Long periods spent in tropical countries, and the constant travelling involved by the visiting of camps make very heavy demands on health. For all these reasons, the delegates' task is one that calls for tireless devotion to the Red Cross ideal. Great firmness and courage,

both moral and physical, and extreme tact are needed in all their dealings. Several have sacrificed their lives on the Red Cross field of honour.

8. Duration of War-Time Activity

A problem of some importance is the delimitation of the period to be regarded as that of the Committee's war-time activities.

Should war be declared, or large-scale military operations take place, the Committee's services are immediately offered. In doubtful situations, such as partisan or civil warfare, the Committee usually waits until an actual state of war exists, or until one side or the other expresses a desire for the Committee's intervention.

In order to give its services rapidly, at any moment, and to the full extent required, the political situation must be closely followed in peace-time and preparations made accordingly, not only by ensuring the conclusion of suitable agreements, but also by making due provision with regard to organisation, equipment and personnel. Thus, as early as the summer of 1938, the Committee made an anticipatory survey of assistants and delegates, and entered into preliminary negotiations with the Swiss authorities for premises and financial advances in case of need, at the same time purchasing the necessary photostat apparatus and other indispensable equipment. Furthermore, the notifications to Governments and Red Cross Societies in case of war were worked out in full detail, as far as possible, more than a year before the time came to send them.

It is easier to determine where the Committee's war-time duties begin than where they end. Neither an armistice, nor the formal conclusion of peace, nor even the dissolution of one belligerent Power marks their term, for they always subsist more or less far into the so-called post-war period. So long as prisoners of war are still detained, they are the International Committee's responsibility until their repatriation. Even when the combat zones disappear with the cessation of hostilities,

the Committee's services are often required, no longer for military, but for psychological reasons, as neutral intermediary between the population and the occupying Power.

The statutes of the International Red Cross require and empower the Committee to take an active part in peace-time and therefore in post-war efforts for the relief of sufferers whose distress is a consequence of the war. As after the first World War, the Committee accordingly took active steps, from the moment of the capitulation of the Axis Powers, to furnish relief not only to various categories of civilians, but to war-stricken populations in occupied and other distressed territories.

The delimitation of the Committee's post-war activities is discussed below.

9. Limitations

A word remains to be said on the subject of the limitations of the Committee's activity. These limitations, as already discussed, are inherent in the Red Cross idea, and in the impartiality and non-political character of Red Cross work. But even within this framework, the tasks in a war involving almost the entire world are so vast, that the Committee must remain ever conscious of the painful inadequacy of the material means and personnel at its disposal.

As to *material means*, these consist first of all in funds for the maintenance of activities at headquarters in Geneva and in the delegations abroad. Such funds must be available at the right moment and in the currency required to meet commitments in respect of regular overhead charges (salaries, rent, transport, etc.). The uncertainty as to the arrival of promised contributions and the difficulties connected with currency transfer, together with the important advances which the Committee had to make to cooperating organisations, were the cause of grave financial anxiety throughout the war years ; they called for the utmost caution, as with the post-war period some regular sources of income came to an end, whilst others diminished. Certain tasks, especially the conveyance of relief

supplies, make it not only essential that the Committee should have sufficient means in hand to cover the running expenses of all the departments concerned, but also that the donors should furnish supplies in kind and funds in cash, so that the Committee, within its general financial framework, may undertake and carry out relief schemes of sufficient importance to justify the maintenance of these departments.

Equally important is the question of *available staff*, quite apart from the matter of adequate salaries. The principles which have to be observed in enrolling personnel restrict recruitment to Switzerland for all practical purposes. It is from this one country's population and among Swiss returning from abroad, that the Committee has to draw practically all its workers, whether voluntary or paid. Though Switzerland is small, its multi-lingual character and far-reaching relations abroad enable it to provide a proportionately large number of suitable staff for an institution like the Committee. Towards the end of the war, however, considerable difficulty was experienced in recruiting and retaining competent assistants, owing to the expected early and considerable diminution of the Committee's activities.

This particular difficulty is common to all institutions whose work is by nature temporary and liable to sudden contraction. It is one to which the Committee had to give serious consideration even during the war ; before assuming any fresh tasks it had to decide whether its future resources in funds, supplies and personnel would be sufficient. When the War ended, this problem became singularly acute, as certain countries lost all immediate interest in the Committee's work, whilst others, though vitally interested, were no longer able to give any material support. Consequently, it became the Committee's imperative duty to adjust its policy to new conditions and to determine the principles upon which retrenchment of its activities might be necessary and justified.

The following considerations have therefore governed the Committee's pursuance of its post-war activities.

First and foremost, the essential task which predominated during the war years, namely, care for all prisoners of war,

must be carried through as well as possible, to the end. This is the more indispensable as these men are today deprived of any Protecting Power, as prisoners of war now excite less public interest than other classes of war victims, and their home countries are no longer in a position to assist them.

Further, the Committee must continue or reorganize its humanitarian activities in behalf of war victims of all categories, to whom a neutral organization can render genuine service. This necessity arises wherever certain relief schemes could not be carried out through any other channel.

The traditional duties of the Committee in connection with the development of international law, its cooperation in the revision of existing international Conventions and the drafting of new ones, must be pursued in the interests of the Red Cross cause in general and to ensure the steady continuance of the Committee's work.

On the other hand, the Committee abandons all activities which other organisations are able to undertake and carry out satisfactorily.

The partial or complete renouncement by the Committee of certain tasks which once formed part of its duties, in no case implies a definite withdrawal from any work of this nature. The Committee reserves the right to take up anew, on its own initiative, such work at any future time.

That the Committee's task must undergo restriction is not only due to the fact that its resources in material and staff are limited, but also to the native principle of the institution, which demands action when others cannot act, either because of their belligerent status, or because they are unwilling or unable to assist the victims of war. The International Committee must at all times be mindful to relinquish activities for which its services are no longer necessary or particularly useful. Only in this way can it hold its resources in readiness for fresh tasks, where its intervention is clearly called for, or desirable.

In view of its peculiar situation, the International Committee must always bear in mind the wise limitations which the authors of the Geneva Convention set themselves. Realistic thinking must be its watchword. Still more important is its duty to

keep a constant and attentive look-out for every occasion where it might convey relief to men and women suffering from the results of war, of situations resembling war, or of other disasters. The International Committee must respond to every call of this kind, within the limits of its available resources, and where any likelihood exists that its intervention can attain any useful purpose.

II. Internal Organization of the Committee's Departments

(A). INTRODUCTION

1. Statutes

It will be useful to set out at the beginning of this chapter, the articles of the Committee's Statutes upon which the organization is based. The Statutes were adopted in 1921 and modified on several occasions, the last being March 26, 1946.

Article 1. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) founded in Geneva in 1863, and confirmed by the decisions of the International Red Cross Conferences, constitutes an association governed by Art. 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code, and is therefore a body corporate with civil capacity.

Article 2. The ICRC is an independent institution having its own status within the limits of the statutes of the International Red Cross.

Article 3. The headquarters of the ICRC are in Geneva.

Article 6. The work of the ICRC shall be directed by a Bureau (Executive Board) elected from its members and composed of the President and at least three members.

The ICRC shall decide the duties of the members of the Bureau and the duration of their term of office.

The ICRC shall adapt its administration to the scope and the nature of its undertakings.

The ICRC is free to appoint a Central Management for the direction of affairs, which shall act under the supervision and according to the instructions of the Bureau. The ICRC may also appoint a General Secretariat.

The members of the Central Management and of the General

Secretariat as well as a Treasurer may be chosen from the members of the ICRC, or from outside that body.

Article 7. The ICRC shall elect its members by co-optation from Swiss citizens, provided that the number of its members does not exceed twenty-five.

Members shall serve for a term of three years. Each year one-third of the members shall retire, but may be re-elected.

2. Organization previous to the outbreak of War

Before the outbreak of hostilities, the administrative services of the ICRC were on a relatively limited scale, the whole organization being lodged in the few rooms of a villa placed at its disposal by the City of Geneva. The Secretariat, Archives, Treasury, the editorial staff of the "*Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*", Enquiry Section, Spanish Civil War Section and others, in all 57 persons, were adequate to ensure the normal working of the ICRC, under the control of the Bureau provided for by the Statutes, and of a few commissions, composed of members of the ICRC, whose duty it was to deal with current problems.

The Spanish Civil War was coming to an end and with it the work of the Commission for Spain, which during the whole of the conflict had made constant efforts to mitigate the distress caused by it ¹. The political horizon, however, was overcast and relations between the great Powers were becoming strained. Faced with this ominous situation, the ICRC felt it was necessary to be prepared for all contingencies and, on September 10, 1938, they set up the "*Commission des Oeuvres de Guerre*" (Commission for Work in time of War). This body, under the chairmanship of M. J. Chenevière (a member of the ICRC), and assisted by the Secretariat, prepared in minute detail the organization of the ICRC on a war footing. It took steps to secure premises and staff for the future Central PW Agency ; it drafted the text of the Notes to be sent to belligerent Powers

¹ See Report on the Committee's activities in Spain.

offering the services of the ICRC and making known the opening of the Agency. It drew up the first list of delegates who would be sent into the countries at war.

On September 1, 1939, the ICRC were ready to begin their duties: within a few days, they had moved into the large building lent to them by the City of Geneva (Palais du Conseil Général), recruited their staff and set to work.

(B). ORGANIZATION ON THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

Although the structure of their organization remained as before, the scope and new features of the problems with which the ICRC were faced caused them to modify the character and composition of the directing body and the departments. They realized, in view of the many unforeseen questions which called for immediate solution, that their organization should not be tied to any rigid set of rules, but must wait on events. Fresh developments might require the opening of a new department or division, perhaps short-lived, but which might, on the other hand, suddenly expand and assume a certain independence. The ICRC, wholly given up to solving the great problems before them, sought above all to create an efficient organization that would be capable of dealing with the demands of a situation which was always fluid, and called for constant adjustments.

No great changes were made, however, in the working methods of the Committee. In their plenary sessions, the Committee decided all important questions of principle and defined their general policy. In view of the fact, however, that some members were not resident in Geneva, or were tied by their military or professional duties, the general management and the direction of its current work were entrusted to a Commission composed of active members who could attend.

From the outbreak of hostilities, this Commission took up the duties of the "Commission for Work in time of War", of which mention has been made and on September 14, 1939, adopted the title of *General Commission* which in November 1940 was altered to *Co-ordination Commission*. The task of this

Commission was to handle questions of urgency, which arose in great numbers ¹.

The Secretariat, subordinate to the Central Commission and also to the other Commissions recently set up (to which reference is made below) assumed, when its organization had been completed, the functions of an executive body to carry out the decisions of those Commissions. Its responsibilities included the correspondence, the recruiting of personal assistants for the President and members in office, and the drafting of minutes of meetings and discussions. It undertook to some extent the administrative structure of some departments. The Secretariat and the Commissions were responsible for the records, the clerical and stenographic staff and the accountant's office. The work of the various departments of the ICRC were directed and governed by the Commissions.

I. Commissions

On the outbreak of war the Committee instructed members who were qualified by their experience in the War of 1914-1918 or by professional training, to form special Commissions to deal with current business. The principal Commissions were active throughout the war, sometimes after having been recast on more extensive lines. They directed the various undertakings of the organization until the war ended, or whilst the post-war problems persisted. They were as follows :

Central Commission, called Co-ordination Commission since November 1940.

This Commission was composed of MM. M. Huber, J. Chenevière, C. Burckhardt and F. Barbey, members of the ICRC. It

¹ The work of the Bureau provided for by the Statutes was limited to the study of questions which although unconnected with the war, were still within the customary province of the ICRC. It was only later in March 1943, that the Co-ordination Commission took the name and assumed the duties of the Bureau.

managed all branches of the ICRC, directing and supervising the conduct of the work in all departments. Its own responsibility for this service was to the ICRC itself. The Central Commission was under the chairmanship of M. Chenevière and the Co-ordination Commission under that of M. Huber.

Commission for PW, Internees and the Central Agency.

(M. Chenevière, M^{me} Frick-Cramer, Dr Cramer and Colonel G. Favre.)

This Commission was responsible for :

- (a) Sub-Commission for Civilians (Mlle. S. Ferrière).
- (b) Sub-Commission for Internees in Switzerland (M. P. E. Martin).
- (c) Sub-Commission of the Central Agency, composed of the principal heads of the Agency.

The last-named served as a board of management for the Central Prisoners of War Agency. They issued instructions concerning the opening of new departments and methods of work to the Management responsible for carrying them out. On March 6, 1941, this Sub-Commission was merged with the Commission for Prisoners and Internees.

Relief Commission.

(M. C. Burckhardt, Mlle. L. Odier, Mlle. R. Bordier, M. M. Bodmer.)

This Commission directed the Relief Section which was set up during 1940.

Press and Propaganda Commission.

(MM. E. Chapuisat, M. Bodmer, G. Wagnière.)

Administrative Commission.

(MM. M. Huber, J. Chenevière, R. de Haller, M. Bodmer.)

This Commission dealt with administrative questions and the balancing of income with expenditure.

Delegations Commission.

Instituted at the beginning of 1941 with M. J. Chenevière as chairman.

The Bureau.

(MM. M. Huber, R. de Haller, F. Barbey, P. Des Gouttes.)

Until 1943, the Bureau was in charge of all current business of the ICRC, exclusive of all duties arising from the war. It included the :

(a) *Legal Commission.* — (MM. M. Huber, P. Logo, and P. Des Gouttes).

(b) « *Revue* » *Commission.* — (MM. P. Des Gouttes, P. E. Martin, F. Barbey, G. Wagnière).

Standing Commissions.

(a) *Membership Commission.* — This Commission is concerned with the recruiting of new members of the ICRC. It submits to the Bureau all proposals of a general order, with special reference to the expediency of inviting persons whose abilities or standing might serve the objects of the ICRC, as well as proposals concerning the number of vacancies to be filled, or the choice of candidates.

(b) *Augusta Fund Commission.* — This Commission was instituted for the administration of the "Augusta Fund" and the distribution of revenues.

(c) *Florence Nightingale Commission.* — This Commission decides the award of the Florence Nightingale Medal to nurses, on the recommendation of the National Red Cross Societies.

(d) *Shoken Fund Joint Commission.* — This Commission, composed of three members appointed by the ICRC and three by the League of Red Cross Societies, attends to the administration of the Fund and the distribution of its revenues, in accordance with the regulations adopted by the XVth International Red Cross Conference.

2. The Secretariat

This was the executive for carrying out all decisions of the ICRC and the Commissions, with the exception of the duties undertaken personally by members of the ICRC. The staff of three in September 1939 rose to sixteen in November 1940. At that time, it was found necessary to scale the responsibilities and M. J. Duchosal was appointed Chief of the Secretariat and M. J. Pictet, Chief Assistant.

(C). DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION DURING THE WAR

As the conflict spread, there had inevitably to be a corresponding increase in ICRC activities. The number of departments grew rapidly and the work of the organization as a whole became more complex.

Several departments which had been merged were replaced by "Divisions". New departments were created. Thus the Relief Division, Prisoner of War and Civilian Internee Division (PIC), Information Division, Medical Division, Financial Division, Special Relief Division, Transports and Communications Division were gradually constituted.

In July 1941, the ICRC took the step of founding, in association with the League of Red Cross Societies, the *Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross*. Its statutes constitute it a corporate body, legally distinct and with civil capacity. The task of this Commission was to carry out relief schemes for civil populations, victims of the war, women and children in particular, and was at the outset constituted under the direction of two representatives from the Committee, two from the League and a fifth member appointed by the two organizations jointly ¹.

In April, 1942, the ICRC established the *Foundation for the*

¹ See Report on the Joint Relief Commission submitted to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, and (for the ICRC) Vol. III of the present Report.

Organization of Red Cross Transports, as an organization legally distinct and with civil capacity. Its task was the purchase or charter of vessels to enable the ICRC to convey relief supplies intended for PW and civil populations. The work of the Foundation was carried on under the auspices and supervision of the ICRC, who appointed the members of the board and provided the initial capital of 10,000 francs ¹.

1. The Bureau and the Commissions

The ICRC decided in March 1943 to give the statutory title of "Bureau" to the Co-ordination Commission, the members and powers to remain unchanged, presided over by M. Huber.

New Commissions were set up. The Commission for Prisoners, Internees and the Central Agency took over the civilians, and was henceforth called the "Commission for Prisoners, Internees and Civilians" (PIC). The Sub-Commission for the Central Agency became a Commission. The following bodies were also constituted: Special Relief Commission (DAS), Transports and Communications Commission, Pharmaceutical Commission, Consultative Medical Commission and Finance Commission.

2. Secretariat

It soon became clear that the members of the ICRC (or more precisely those who were not prevented by their professional duties from giving their services regularly to the organization), however willing, could not carry the whole-burden of the new extensions. It was therefore necessary to strengthen the Secretariat by drafting on to the permanent staff assistants whose qualifications and relevant experience would provide it with a framework adequate for all contingencies. This reconstitution was done in several stages.

¹ See Report on the Foundation submitted to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference and Vol. III of the present Report.

The first step was the formation in February, 1942 of a *Central Secretariat*. In addition to the Head of the Secretariat, appointed Secretary-General in June 1942, and his Chief Assistant, three Secretaries were appointed to deal with all general questions relating to the principal Divisions of the Secretariat, i.e. Prisoners and Internees (M. R. Gallopin) ; Relief (M. Hans de Watteville) ; and Delegations (M. C. Pilloud).

In addition to the office of the Secretary-General and the offices of the President and of the ICRC members, the Central Secretariat was responsible for other sections : Delegates' reports, Camp statistics, Liaison, Records and Library, for which the staff totalled 79 in 1944.

To meet the increasing pressure of work, which steadily became more complex, the Bureau of the ICRC in July, 1944, decided to form a General Secretariat subject to its authority and guided by its instructions. It had the following members : M. J. Duchosal, Secretary-General, responsible for all matters of administration and information ; M. H. Bachmann, Assistant Secretary-General, responsible for Relief ; M. R. Gallopin, Assistant Secretary-General, who dealt with matters relating to the conditions and treatment of PW, civilian internees and civilians ; M. J. Pictet, Assistant Secretary-General, responsible for the Secretariat of the ICRC, the Presidency and the Bureau, and also for all questions of international law.

The four members of the General Secretariat were placed on an equal footing ; they attended the meetings of the Bureau in an advisory capacity and formed part of the various ICRC Commissions, with the right to vote.

(D). PRESENT ORGANIZATION

1. The President's Office

M. Max Huber had, since the death of M. Gustave Ador in 1928, dedicated himself to the office of President with the highest distinction and devotion. He expressed his wish to retire

at the end of 1944, at the age of seventy. The Committee reluctantly deferred to this request and, on December 4, 1944, appointed as President M. Carl J. Burckhardt, who had been a member of the ICRC since 1933 and who had given eminent service to the organization since the beginning of the War.

Shortly afterwards, M. Burckhardt was appointed Swiss Minister in Paris by the Swiss Federal Council and was therefore obliged to give up his presidential duties. The ICRC then begged M. Max Huber to resume the office of President *ad interim*. He accepted, and on February 24, 1945 was appointed Honorary President, with the office of Acting President, whilst M. Burckhardt became President *en congé* as from May 1945. M. J. Chenevière and M. A. Lombard were appointed Vice-Presidents for 1945. In 1946, M. Ed. Chapuisat was elected a Vice-President.

Two years later, in January 1947, M. Huber asked to be finally released from office as Acting President and on January 29, 1947, the Committee appointed Dr. Ernest Gloor and M. Martin Bodmer as Vice-Presidents for the current year, and at the same time to act as joint Presidents, whilst M. Burckhardt kept the title of President *en congé*.

2. The ICRC "in pleno"

The highest authority of the ICRC are the Plenary Sessions which are usually held once a month and which include :

(a) All statutory functions and those deriving from the Swiss Civil Code ; the election of new and honorary members, the President, members of the Bureau and their substitutes, members of the Central Management ¹ and the General Secretariat ; the establishment of foundations or associations subordinate to the ICRC ; the appointment of members of such foundations or associations when such appointments depend upon the ICRC and are not delegated to the Bureau.

¹ See page 59.

(b) Decisions of a general nature relating to the Committee's work and its administration ;

(c) All matters which the Bureau consider desirable to submit to the Plenary Session of the ICRC ;

(d) Proposals and study of schemes put forward by individual members.

The Central Management and the Secretary-General submit monthly reports to the Plenary Sessions on all ICRC activities.

3. The Bureau

No important change in the structure, working methods and composition of the Bureau have occurred since March 10, 1943, when it was merged with the Co-ordination Commission and assumed henceforth the direction and supervision of the Committee's activities.

Art. 6 of the ICRC Statutes¹ together with the " Rules of Procedure for the Bureau " adopted on February 22, 1946, determine the character and duties of this body. The text of the Rules is as follows :

(1) The Bureau shall direct the International Committee's activities unless the latter are determined by decisions made in Plenary Session, or delegated to the President, the Central Management or the General Secretariat, by the Committee or by the Bureau.

(2) The Bureau may set up Commissions within the framework of the organization in general.

(3) The Bureau may entrust special duties to members of the Committee within the framework of the organization in general

(4) The Bureau decides which members of the Committee or staff in its service shall be authorized to sign documents. All documents involving the finances of the ICRC and affecting third parties, shall bear two signatures of persons duly authorized for this purpose by the Bureau.

(5) As a rule, members of the Central Management and the Secretary-General shall take part, in an advisory capacity, in meetings of the

¹ See page 48.

Bureau, which other members of the Committee's staff may also be summoned to attend.

The Bureau has met at least once a week. Its members study all important documents relevant to the current work of the ICRC. Reports are submitted by members of the Central Management (Director-delegates), and by the Secretary-General concerning questions of interest which have arisen in their respective fields, and on other matters which come within the competence proper of the Bureau, or for which special instructions are required. The Bureau also examines all questions submitted by the various Commissions and in general, all problems of importance.

Those subjects relating to the work and administration of the ICRC and calling for decisions of a general kind are referred to the Plenary Sessions.

As indicated in the " Rules of Procedure " mentioned above, the Bureau appoints the various Commissions of the ICRC and delegates one member as ' liaison ' to each Commission, to report on the measures adopted by them.

In 1947, the Members of the Bureau were—Dr. E. Gloor, Vice-President of the ICRC, *Chairman* ; M. M. Bodmer, Vice-President of the ICRC, Mlle. S. Ferrière, Mlle. L. Odier, M. L. Boissier, Dr. E. Grasset, *Members* ; M. J. Chenevière, M. E. Chaupisat, M. R. van Berchem, *Assistant Members*.

4. Central Management, General Secretariat and Advisors

Early in 1946, the ICRC felt it necessary to adopt their working methods to the new and difficult post-war conditions, in order to maintain the work at an efficient level, in spite of reduced staff. On March 1, 1946, the direction of all branches of its work was entrusted to the *Central Management*, to which all departments were subordinate.

The Central Management is subject to the instructions and supervision of the Bureau. It deals with all administrative measures, such as the appointment and discharging of staff,

organizing of sections, and makes all decisions necessary for the general working and co-ordination of ICRC activities.

The Central Management was composed of members of the former General Secretariat, joined later by the Director of Finance and Treasurer : it included :

M. R. Gallopin, Director-Delegate of the ICRC : PW, Internees and Civilian Division (PIC), Central PW Agency, Delegations Division.

M. J. Pictet, Director-Delegate of the ICRC : Secretariat of the Committee and Bureau, Legal Division, Information and « Revue » Division, Archives Division, Translation Section ;

M. G. Dunand, Director-Delegate of the ICRC ; Relief Division, Medical Division ;

M. H. Cuchet, Director-Delegate and Treasurer of the ICRC ; Treasury Division, Administration and Personnel Division.

The Secretary-General of the ICRC, M. J. Duchosal, deals with external relations, in particular those with National Societies, and instructions are given him direct by the Bureau. He takes part in the meetings of the Central Management, which are held at least once a week.

The Director-Delegates and the Secretary-General are present at meetings of the Bureau, when they are given a general outline of action to be taken, for which they are responsible to the Bureau and upon which they make regular reports. They submit to the Bureau all questions requiring confirmation or amendment of instructions received, or which involve an extension of work in progress or the opening of a new field of action. The Central Management also drafts the budget and submits it to the Bureau, which supervises its periodic application. The Management also submits to the Bureau all proposals likely to involve unforeseen expenditure.

As a rule, the Director-Delegates and the Secretary-General also take part, in an advisory capacity, in the Plenary Sessions of the ICRC to which they submit, usually once a month, a general report on work in progress.

The ICRC decided to call upon certain persons, from outside the organization, to act as advisors. They are entitled to bring to the attention of the Bureau any question which has been

debated by any Commission of which they are members. Three counsellors of the ICRC were appointed : M. F. Siordet, Professor A. Beck, and M. G. Golay ; of these, the last two have resigned.

5. Divisions

The course of events having caused the ICRC to centralize and co-ordinate the work of the Secretariat, similar measures were required as regards the various departments. Their structure and composition were modified, and they were redistributed amongst a number of Divisions, each corresponding to a well-defined branch of the work.

At the time of writing (June 30, 1947), each of the nine Divisions is under the supervision and responsibility of a Director-Delegate. Each head of a Division is responsible to a Director. This head ensures the proper function of his Division with the help of the heads of Section or Service, and ensures the co-ordination of the work of each department or section. (See attached table.)

Alphabetical list of Members of the ICRC from September 1939 to June 1947.

MM.	G. E. Audéoud	(1925) ¹ deceased 1943.
	F. Barbey-Ador	(1915) resigned 1947 ; honorary member.
	R. van Berchem	(1946)
	M. Bodmer	(1940) Vice-President 1947.
	E. Boissier	(1914) resigned 1940 ; honorary member.
	L. Boissier	(1946)
Mlle.	R. Bordier	(1938)

¹ The date in brackets is that of the member's appointment.

MM.	B. Bouvier	(1919)	resigned 1938 ; honorary member ; deceased 1941.
	Burckhardt, C.J.	(1933)	President from January 1, 1945 ; en congé since May, 1945.
	P. Carry	(1946)	
	E. Chapuisat	(1938)	Vice-President 1946.
	J. Chenevière	(1919)	Vice-President 1945.
Dr.	A. Cramer	(1938)	
MM.	L. Cramer	(1921)	resigned 1946 ; honorary member.
	P. Des Gouttes	(1918)	deceased 1943.
	P. Etter	(1940)	
	G. Favre	(1924)	
Mlle.	S. Ferrière	(1924)	
Mme.	R. M. Frick-Cramer	(1918)	resigned 1946 ; honorary member.
Dr.	E. Gloor	(1945)	Vice-President 1947.
Dr.	E. Grasset	(1945)	
MM.	E. de Haller	(1941)	resigned 1941 ; honorary member.
	R. de Haller	(1924)	Treasurer from 1924 to 1946 ; resigned 1946 ; honorary member.
	M. Huber	(1923)	President from 1928 until December 31, 1944 ; Acting President from May, 1945 to December, 1946 ; Honorary President.
	P. Logoz	(1921)	resigned 1942 ; honorary member.
	A. Lombard	(1942)	Treasurer from 1942 to 1945 ; Vice-President 1945 ; resigned 1946.

	A. Lüchinger	(1946)	
	P.-E. Martin	(1937)	resigned 1946.
	J.-B. Micheli	(1935)	deceased 1945.
	G. Motta	(1923)	deceased 1940.
Mlle.	L. Odier	(1930)	
Dr.	G. Patry	(1929)	
MM.	F. de Planta	(1930)	resigned 1945 ; honorary member ; deceased 1946.
	D. Schindler	(1946)	
Dr.	A.-L. Vischer	(1945)	
MM.	G. Wagnière	(1936)	resigned 1945 ; honorary member.
	W. Yung	(1937)	resigned 1941.
	H. Zangger	(1932)	resigned 1947 ; honorary member.

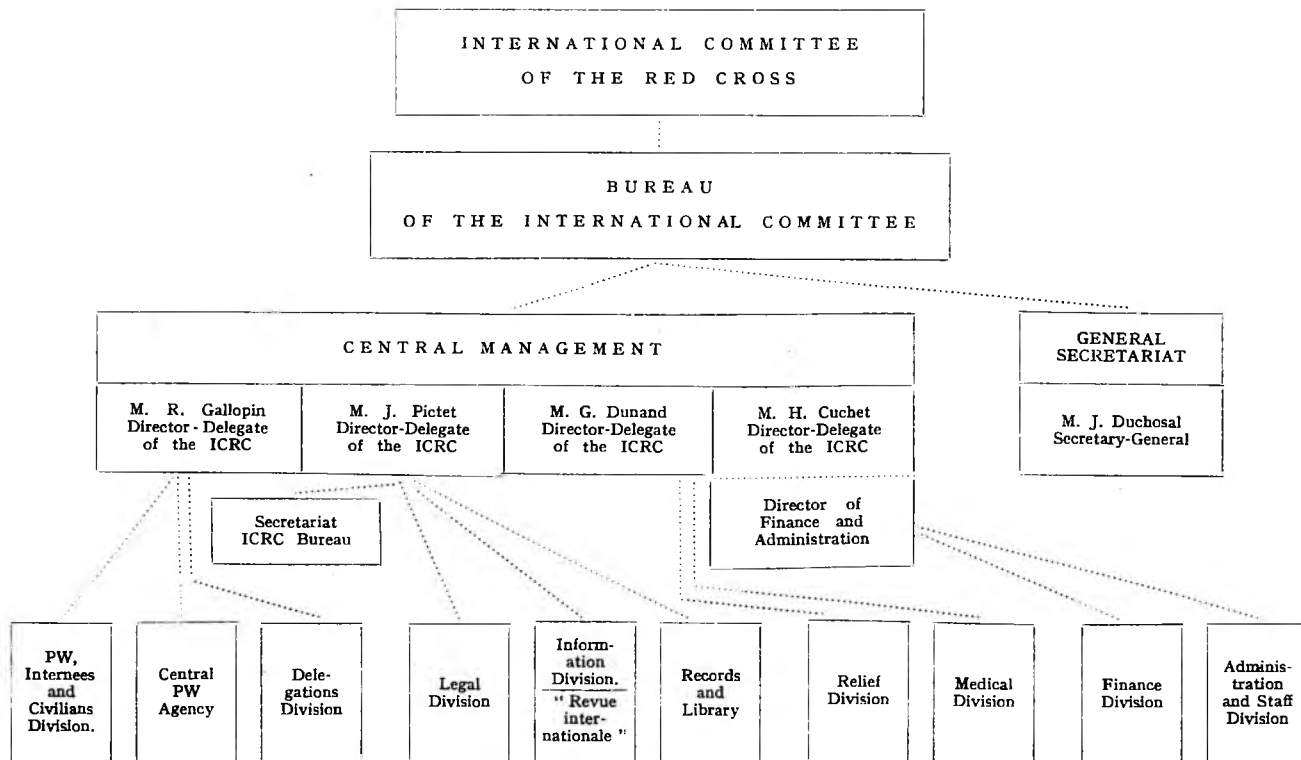
Statistics of the Committee's Staff.

	Staff in Geneva	Staff in Switzerland ¹	Staff abroad ²	Total
On December 31, 1939	360	—	3	363
„ 1940	1306	450	16	1772
„ 1941	1580	1744	36	3360
„ 1942	1595	1417	70	3082
„ 1943	1764	1157	87	3008
„ 1944	1950	1286	137	3373
„ 1945	1454	814	179	2447
„ 1946	771	232	114	1117
On June 30 1947	590	45	87	722

¹ With the exception of Geneva.

² The figures in this column include only delegates and assistant-delegates, and not the delegation staffs of Swiss or other nationalities, representing an average total of about 300 persons.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S DEPARTMENTS



III. Activities of the Committee's Delegations in various parts of the world

(A). GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

To play the part of intermediary between belligerents in wartime, in what concerns the work of mercy, calls, at least to some extent, for direct personal contacts. The Committee's activities are sustained from outside sources, and are likewise wholly directed towards the outside. Liaison, therefore, with the National Red Cross Societies and with Governments is indispensable. This is the task of the special missions and permanent delegations.

If the Committee's role were exactly defined by the Conventions, a corps of delegates—or at least a skeleton staff—could be built up beforehand, and its duties, including relations with authorities, defined in advance. But this is not the case, and it is left to circumstances and governments to decide.

At the outset of the war the situation was fairly simple. A few countries only were affected, most of them within easy reach of Geneva. As soon as the "Blitz" against Poland was ended, the war became more or less static. The earliest and, for a time, the sole concern of the ICRC was to ensure the functioning of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, and to visit the camps. Appropriate arrangements had to be made on the spot with the authorities and the national Societies, to speed up the transmission of lists and other information to the Agency. Visits to the camps, a practice begun during the first World War which proved of immense benefit to the inmates, had to be resumed. In 1914 prisoners of war had no more protection than that given by the inadequate provisions of the

Hague Convention : in 1939, on the other hand, their situation was covered in detail by a complete legal code, namely the 1929 PW Convention. It fell to the Committee's delegates, and to the representatives of the Protecting Powers, to watch how this Convention was applied. The task of visiting the camps was entrusted preferably to doctors, because of their special qualifications. Knowing just how much trained men can endure without undue risk, medical practitioners are less easily impressed than laymen by apparent deficiencies, not detrimental to health. On the other hand, they are able to recognize defects which would escape the inexperienced eye. What interests them is to find out not only whether rations are "good", but whether they have sufficient nutritive value.

As the conflict spread, the tasks of the ICRC rapidly increased. The Agency had to exchange correspondence with all countries, precisely at a time when communications were paralysed. In all theatres, the number of prisoners of war mounted with great speed. In Europe, in the Axis countries alone, they already numbered several million. Those taken by the Allies, until the last few months of the war, were less numerous, but were scattered far and wide ; from the battlefields of Europe and North Africa they were sent to camps as far away as India, the United States and Australia. Each new declaration of war, even in the case of the countries farthest away from the theatre of operations, led to the internment of hundreds, if not thousands of civilians, in America, the Far East and South Africa, as well as in Europe. For visits to be made to these widely scattered camps, delegates were needed.

The war had spread wide over a great extent of the world. Graver was the fact that each day its ravages went deeper and continued to make fresh classes of victims. To the prisoners of war and civilian internees, ever growing in number, were added millions of other victims, all the populations suffering from starvation and persecution, from bombing and forcible separation from their homes. Prisoners and internees were not always adequately protected by the Conventions, or failed to have the benefit of their proper application. The ICRC interceded and negotiated ; it endeavoured to fill existing gaps by

particular schemes. The Committee tried to do what it could for the persons who enjoyed no treaty protection ; it suggested projects, organized, and above all improvised. This work required a still larger number of delegates.

With each phase, the war brought new problems and at the same time destroyed the means of solving them. The belligerents not only used weapons such as bombs and shells that shattered the lines of communication and forced the ICRC constantly to seek fresh routes and means of transport ; they also resorted to blockades, the censorship, and other restrictive measures. The medical delegates had an increasingly valuable part in the work, and it became necessary to have the help of legal advisers to carry on negotiations, commercial agents to buy relief supplies, shipping agents to transport the goods, and experienced business men to organize the work. In a small country like Switzerland, which was concentrating all its energies on national defence, it was not easy to find all the help needed in such exceptional circumstances. The ICRC was unable to send out the requisite number of delegates as promptly as it could have wished, since the belligerents were not always disposed to receive them. Weeks, often months, were wasted in attempts to secure travel permits.

The few delegates who were available, had to undertake the most varied tasks. They had to represent on the spot all the departments of the Geneva organization. The allocation of duties could be easily settled in Geneva and in those countries which were far from the scene of the fighting and where problems were few and unvaried. But this was not possible in Germany, nor in the occupied countries. Here, in consequence of bombing and shortage of supplies, the daily cry was for immediate relief of all kinds ; here, above all, the need was for prompt and decisive action in emergencies. At such times the organizer had to act as lawyer, the legal expert as public health officer, the doctor as merchant and diplomatist. In some of the oppressed countries, where everything was destroyed, pillaged or laid waste, the delegate was obliged to undertake, over and above his official duties, yet other tasks, arising out of his very presence in the country. The mere sight of a sign-plate bearing the

Red Cross raised boundless hopes ; in their distress, people credited the delegate from Geneva with almost superhuman powers.

We cannot describe here the duties of a delegate ; his work forms an essential part of the activities of the Committee itself ; he is both a source of information and an executive agent. Each chapter, every page almost, of this Report should convey to the reader a picture of his work, his constant endeavours and, above all, the conditions in which he often had to labour. Think of him in the cities where, for weeks on end, the bombers carried out their deadly mission by day and by night. Imagine him returning from an exhausting expedition, to find masses of arrears to be dealt with in his shelter : to-morrow he will have to be out on the roads again, inspecting camps or organizing transport. This involved hours of car-driving ; he must be ready at any instant to stop and jump into a ditch to escape the planes which attacked every moving object. On all sides were traces of previous bombings, which he just managed to escape, railway lines cut, roads destroyed, towns in flames, office-buildings gone, the authorities vanished. Carefully worked-out plans were thus obliterated, and the delegate was compelled constantly to have recourse to new and improvised schemes.

These arduous and manifold duties had sometimes to be carried out unaided ; the delegate was suddenly cut off from Geneva and from his colleagues ; post-office services failed and no assistance was available. Sometimes the delegate always worked single-handed, and did so until the end of the war. Such was the case of certain delegates in the Far East ; official recognition was sometimes refused to them, and they were always strictly supervised and under a cloud of suspicion. Cut off in foreign countries, they had to be prepared for everything and make decisions upon which the fate of thousands depended. To all these considerations, add at times a pitiless feeling of helplessness. The whole purpose of the delegates' work is to protest against suffering. Too often the answer to such protest is renewed suffering and more massacres. What could they achieve scattered over a world given up to self-destruction ? How could their inadequate means challenge the forces unleashed by the war ? These were the men who had to meet all contingencies.

A mere handful, where there should be a hundred or a thousand, they were men devoted to duty, who never flinched. They persevered, because the ICRC which they represented is the "guardian of humanitarian principles", signifying life and health for millions of beings condemned by war to suffering and death. They believed in their mission, and this belief, in the tragic circumstances in which they found themselves, when all principles were betrayed and noble words lost their significance, made them persist stubbornly, in spite of all obstacles and without ever losing courage.

The ICRC can declare that, in the gravest moments, in the most exposed situations, where many of them barely escaped with their lives, these representatives did their task with a high sense of duty and in a spirit of entire selflessness.

The present Report renders a last tribute to those of them who died at their post.

Ernest BAER	Delegate in British India, died of sun-stroke while visiting PW camps.
Robert BRUNEL	Delegate in Greece, died of exhaustion as a result of over-work at his post.
Richard HEIDER	Convoy agent, drowned when his relief ship for Greece was torpedoed.
Charles HUBER	Delegate in Germany, killed in a road accident in the pursuit of his duties.
Johann JOVANOVITZ	Delegate in Germany, shot accidentally by a sentry whose signal he had not observed.
Georges MOREL	Delegate in Australia, died in the execution of his duties in the Dutch East Indies, in consequence of a delayed operation.
Dr. S. PARAVICINI	Chief of the delegation in Japan, worn out by the difficulties of his position and duties.
Marcel REUTER	Convoying agent on board SS <i>Embla</i> , died at sea.
A. William SCHMID-KOECHLIN	Delegate in Belgium, died on service in consequence of refusing to take sick-leave.

Matthaeus VISCHER Delegate in Borneo, and his wife. Suspected of espionage by the Japanese owing to their insistence on conveying relief to PW. Both were condemned by court-martial and shot.

To this list could be added the names of all the local assistants recruited by the ICRC and who died at their posts.

(B). GROWTH OF THE DELEGATIONS.

The representation of the ICRC abroad was at first established in order to meet urgent requirements. It was later organized in accordance with existing needs and circumstances, often despite manifold difficulties. The measures to be taken were pressing and the obstructions many, so that improvisation was always more or less inevitable. This should be kept in mind in reviewing rapidly the main phases of the conflict and in noting their influence on the setting up of the delegations and their particular tasks.

1. First Phase (*September 1939 to June 1940*).

When Poland was invaded, and Great Britain and France declared war, the ICRC offered its services to the belligerents as intermediary in the humanitarian field. At the same time it despatched a special mission to *Germany*, one to *France*, and one to *Poland*; the last-named was obliged to make a detour by way of Rumania, and failed to reach its destination, being forestalled by military operations. These missions were reinforced as needed. At the same time, the Committee took the initiative in setting up permanent delegations in certain countries less easily reached from Geneva, such as *Great Britain*, *Egypt* and the *Argentine* (for Latin America).

The main tasks were to make arrangements on the spot for regular liaison with the Central Prisoners of War Agency, to visit prisoners camps, and in general, to establish the bases from which the Committee's work could go on, to meet the developments of the war.

2. Second Phase (*June 1940 to June 1941*).

It was during this period that the first increase in the number of delegations took place. In the course of a few weeks, that is from June 1940, the "blitz" in the West enabled the Germans to take prisoner two million Allied troops, thus confronting the ICRC with an immense problem which continued to be one of its chief anxieties until the end of the war. From this time onward the special missions, in spite of their proximity to Geneva, no longer sufficed. A permanent delegation had to be set up in Germany and at once became the most important of all these missions.

Hardly had military operations ended, for the time being, in Western Europe, when fighting broke out elsewhere. It flared up anew in the Balkans with the war between Italy and Greece, followed by the German invasion of South-eastern Europe in the spring, which caused a fresh influx of prisoners into the territory of the Reich. Fighting was resumed too, in Africa, and after more prisoners had been taken on both sides, the fall of Addis Ababa resulted in an entire Italian Army being made prisoner by the British. These men were immediately removed to camps scattered throughout most of the Dominions and the British Colonies. The Near East also became a theatre of war.

These events obliged the ICRC to set up delegations, one after the other in *Italy, Greece, Australia, Syria, India, Yugoslavia* (Belgrade), *Italian East Africa* and *Ethiopia*, in *British East Africa*, in *French Equatorial Africa*, in *Ceylon* and even as far away as *New Zealand* and *Rhodesia*.

The tasks devolving upon the delegates grew in proportion to this increase in their number. To the prisoners of war there were now added Civilian Internees, in whose behalf, on a basis of analogy, the ICRC invoked the 1929 Convention and in general succeeded in obtaining its application. They were to be found in all the belligerent countries, not only in the homeland, but also in the most distant colonies. This meant so many more camps to visit, and new problems to solve. Also, the Central Agency, in addition to its work for PW, now took

on the immense task of helping the civilians, those millions who had been isolated and scattered by the mass exodus of refugees, by invasion, air bombardments, or simply by the forming of new battle-fronts. This was a heavy burden on the delegates, who were beset with enquiries, and overwhelmed with applications for help. The Relief Department assumed such proportions that the delegates, especially in Germany, had to undertake an immense amount of work, in addition to camp visiting, reports, and endless negotiations with the authorities in order to ensure transport to the camps, storage, and distribution of the thousands of tons of foodstuffs, medical supplies and clothing. At *Lisbon* and *Marseilles*, the ICRC had to set up managing delegations, amounting to shipping agencies, to handle the unloading, reloading, and transport as far as the Swiss depots, of the shiploads of relief parcels arriving from countries overseas.

This period witnessed the opening of a permanent secretariat in *Paris*, a special office in *Washington*, and a delegation in *Brazil*.

3. Third Phase (*Summer of 1941 to end of 1943*).

During this period the conflict spread to the whole world. It began with the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Unhappily, the belligerents on the Eastern Front were not bound by the 1929 PW Convention, since this agreement had not been ratified by Russia. The Committee's offers of assistance were set aside. There could be no delegation in the Soviet Union and the delegates in Germany were, in spite of their efforts, unable to do anything for the Russian PW. Nevertheless, at the outbreak of hostilities, a delegation was set up in *Ankara* to deal with a possible exchange of mail and nominal rolls of PW between the USSR and Germany. Except in a few instances, this delegation was unable to play its intended part. It was, however, able to serve as a forwarding agency for PW mail in the Near and Middle East, and ultimately became a useful base for relief work in Greece and the Balkans.

In December 1941, a new and unexpected problem arose, which remained a constant source of anxiety. This was the

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, followed by declarations of war by Germany and Italy against the United States, and the lightning advance of the Japanese in the Far East and Pacific.

The ICRC already had a representative in Washington, and henceforward this delegation was to be of great importance. On the other side of the Pacific, there was only a small delegation, in Java. The ICRC was anxious to be represented wherever PW and civilian internees were found. As it took weeks, sometimes even months, to send delegates from Geneva, arrangements were made by correspondence to recruit Swiss citizens on the spot, who consented to take on this mission, without being able to form any idea of its scope and difficulties. As from January 1942, the ICRC appointed delegates in *Tokyo*, the *Philippines*, *Shanghai*, *Singapore* and *Hong-Kong*, and in 1943, for China at *Chung-king* and lastly in *Siam*. Japan, however, had not ratified the 1929 PW Convention. The ICRC's offer of its services, its insistence on carrying out its customary work, failed to evoke any response on the part of the Japanese authorities. They consented however to recognize officially only the delegates in Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong-Kong, but the activities of these delegates were tolerated rather than permitted. As to the ICRC's other representatives, these could act only in a personal capacity. It was not until the last phase of the war that the Committee was authorized to send delegates from Geneva, and even then only to Tokyo. Its representatives in the Far East were until the end obliged to act as single-handed agents. Scattered as they were over an immense territory, their task was overwhelming, so great were the needs both of PW and civilians, and so formidable were the obstacles to be overcome. Misunderstood, constantly hindered and under suspicion, sometimes bullied, and always isolated, they were yet undiscouraged, and displayed the greatest perseverance and devotion to duty. Two of them died at their posts.

Hardly had the military situation in the Far East become stabilized, for the time being, than a new development occurred in the West. In October, 1942, the first British offensive in Libya began, followed in November by the Allied landing in

French North Africa. From then onwards the campaign continued, leaving in its train a growing mass of PW of the Axis countries, until the liberation of Africa was completed in May. The campaign was resumed almost immediately in Italy. Then came the Italian capitulation, followed by the dividing-up of the peninsula, as a result of military events and the internal political situation.

Events of such magnitude had profound repercussions upon the Committee's work. The existing delegations in Egypt had to be immediately reinforced, and new ones created. This was all the more necessary as Switzerland had become surrounded since the occupation of the southern zone of France, and communications with the Allied countries, already slow, had become very difficult. In Germany, because of the concentration of PW in one country, the centralization of the military and other authorities, and the state of communications by road and rail (still adequate at that time), it was possible to maintain a single delegation in the capital, whence the delegates could travel round to the camps and also telephone to Geneva. In the Mediterranean zone, on the other hand, the prison camps were so scattered, the Allied military authorities so many, the situation so fluid and communications so difficult, that a number of new delegations had to be set up, and were at once faced by the most varied tasks. In 1943 therefore, delegations were opened at *Oran*, *Tunis*, and *Tangier*; then in *Milan*, *Florence*, and *Verona*; in *Genoa*, *Turin* and *Palermo*, and finally, in January 1944, in *Naples*; whilst special missions were sent to the *Yemen*, *French Equatorial Africa*, and the *Gold Coast*.

Even in countries at a great distance from actual operations, each new declaration of war, or merely the breaking off of relations, led to the internment of civilian residents, or of sailors from torpedoed and scuttled vessels. Moreover, when groups of armed men, escaped PW, or civilians fleeing from persecution began to enter the territory of certain neutral countries, internment camps were set up by the neutrals. In all these instances, the ICRC claimed and secured the right to carry out its work of charity in the camps. This meant the opening of new delega-

tions, usually staffed by people recruited on the spot. In the winter of 1941-1942 this was done in *Surinam*, *Haiti*, and *Jamaica*; the following summer in *Venezuela*, *Columbia*, and *Mexico*, and next in *Uruguay* and *Bolivia*; by the autumn there were delegations in *Brazil* and *Madagascar*; the year after in *Croatia*, *Switzerland*, *Spain*, *Hungary* and *Cuba*.

The "World War" had also become a "total War". Economic and financial blockade and counter-blockade, and, in the occupied countries, requisitioning in bulk, were now added to the air raids which destroyed ports, railway-stations, and industrial plant, gradually paralysing economic life, and the submarine warfare which sent to the bottom food supplies on which whole populations depended. The economic situation in Europe and the Far East deteriorated still further, with much consequent ill effect on the prisoners of war. The efforts to bring relief to these men had to be intensified, at the very time when barriers of all kinds were increasing. These efforts, especially in the case of PW in the Axis countries, became very considerable and called for the constant reinforcement of the existing delegations. Besides the PW there were millions of civilians who appeared to be exposed to starvation. For them, there were no conventions, excepting the old-fashioned Hague Regulations, which had not been honoured and which, as far as the ICRC was concerned, offered no basis for action. Nevertheless, with the means at its disposal, sadly inadequate in face of the disaster, the ICRC and its delegations did all that they could. After various minor attempts, relief work on a larger and more permanent scale was organized for Greece. Soon after the total occupation of that country, the delegation in Athens, which had been set up to carry on the usual activities in behalf of PW, collaborated in the general relief scheme by organizing soup-kitchens. But this was not enough, and the gravity of the situation aroused public opinion throughout the world. Thanks in particular to the neutral intervention of the ICRC, food supplies came through the blockade. The delegation thereupon set up a relief organization which, with the help of a Swedish delegation, assumed vast dimensions. The aim was nothing less than to organize the revictualling of an entire

country on a permanent basis. Besides the delegates the in capital, others were required in *Salonika*, *Thessaly*, *Corfu*, and elsewhere¹.

There were other countries to be helped, as well as Greece. The problem was so great that a special body was set up jointly by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, to deal with relief for civil populations. But the strictness of the blockade permitted the despatch of food supplies only to those countries where the ICRC was able effectually to supervise their distribution. This meant more work for many of the existing delegations, which in consequence were further reinforced, and the creation of new outposts. There was one in *Rumania*, where grain was bought and shipped to the hunger-stricken countries, one in *Belgium* for the supervision of relief distribution, and one in *San Sebastian*, as a forwarding agency.

This situation, as one can imagine, reacted on the organization of the work even in Geneva itself.

During the first two phases of the war, the delegates were few and their tasks, like those of the ICRC, limited. Communications with Geneva were, moreover, relatively easy. The delegates were attached direct to the members and secretariat of the ICRC, and questions relating to their missions were dealt with in Geneva by departments organized on a geographical basis. In the early spring of 1941 it was decided to co-ordinate this work by means of a weekly meeting of those members of the ICRC and the Secretariat most nearly concerned, for the purpose of examining in common all the problems relating to the activity and structure of the delegations.

The third phase and the spread of war all over the globe, obliged the ICRC to instal delegates in nearly all countries. The resulting expansion of activities called for the sharing out of the work in Geneva among special departments known as "Divisions". As communications with headquarters became increasingly difficult, sometimes breaking down altogether, it was no longer enough for a delegate to set out armed with instructions from the Agency and a programme of camp visits.

¹ See Vol. III, Part IV.

In most instances, he had to work for one or more of the Divisions, and to be ready, according to circumstances, to engage in all the different fields of activity of the ICRC at the same time. Some went to posts where they would be working single-handed. Others might have to do so at any moment. Thus they had to be adequately informed of the activities of the ICRC throughout the world and of the general policy governing them.

All this added to the difficulty of recruiting delegates, which became a serious anxiety for the ICRC. It was a question of finding enough men, and qualified men. In 1943 a delegate had to be ready to face any situation. He had to have wide experience in his profession and to be a capable linguist ; he had besides to be a man of sound intellectual, physical, and moral stamina.

Moreover, this recruitment involved serious practical difficulties, such as permits and visas, the planning of itineraries, and the obtaining of transport or transit permits. In some cases almost the whole of the food supplies needed for the delegate and his staff had to be provided.

From the beginning of 1942, it was found necessary to set up a separate office to deal exclusively with certain administrative questions. A special news-sheet gave each delegation in all the five continents regular information of a general kind, concerning the work in Geneva and that of the other delegations, and guidance for their instruction and in their practical work. A Delegations Office had the task of co-ordinating all matters concerning the delegations. Then, in the spring of 1943, a Delegations Division took its place beside the other chief divisions, as an integral part of the ICRC. All activities were centralized in this Division : recruitment, appointment and training of delegates, travel arrangements, general instructions, and periodic meetings to hear reports and deal with the work of delegates returning to, or passing through Geneva.

At the end of 1943 it was found necessary to set up a Delegations Commission. This body, composed of members of the Committee and senior staff representatives, met weekly in order to outline general policy, determine questions of principle, take important decisions, and to bring delegates returning from missions up to date on the situation.

4. Fourth Phase (*January 1944 to August 1945*).

During this last phase, the only new addition to the network of the ICRC delegations was opened at *Bratislava*. Already at the end of 1943 this network covered the entire globe (not taking into account the USSR), with the exception of the Netherlands and Poland. It became necessary, with the constant expansion of military operations and the growing complexity of the problems, to make changes in the structure and functions of many of the delegations, and to reinforce some of them.

The Red Army offensive, which in a fairly short time liberated the south-east and east of Europe, caused hardly any changes. At the same time, it had the effect of cutting off the delegates from Geneva just at the moment when they were being confronted with new tasks. For instance, during the last few days of the fighting in Hungary, the delegation in Budapest was called upon to play a vital part in the protection of certain sections of the civil population, and then to supervise important relief services. The setting up of the branch delegation in *Vienna* was not permitted by the German Authorities until December, 1944, and that in *Prague* until April, 1945. They became first rank delegations from the time of the liberation and were immediately confronted with extremely delicate problems. The same thing happened in Greece. After the British landing, the delegation acted as neutral intermediary between the EAM forces and the Greek Government, whilst continuing to help in the distribution of food supplies to the country.

In Italy, the numerous small delegations made it possible, as the fighting lines shifted, to carry on the relief activities of the ICRC uninterruptedly, and independently of immediate reinforcements. In France, on the other hand, the situation was quite different. The Allied landings cut the routes to Switzerland by which relief supplies for the camps in Germany were transported. Once more measures had to be improvised and a new delegation had to be installed in *Gothenburg*, in Sweden, to supervise the unloading and re-shipment to *Lübeck*

(where a branch delegation was opened) of the relief supplies hitherto shipped via Lisbon and Marseilles. Next, the liberation of France entailed the immediate reorganization of the Paris delegation. That office, which during the German occupation Central PW worked mainly for the Agency, was reinforced on several occasions after September 1944. To it were transferred certain members of the Algiers delegation, in order to deal with the problem suddenly created by the presence of growing numbers of German PW in a territory still in a state of disorganization. Two regional delegations were opened, one in *Lyons*, to deal with routine tasks, the other at *Toulon*, to take over the activities formerly carried on by that in Marseilles.

Throughout the war, the ICRC had endeavoured to set up delegations in all the countries occupied by Germany. All that it had been able to do for Norway, Belgium, and France was to send at first, special missions attached to the delegation in Berlin. Later it was allowed to have a "liaison agent" in Belgrade and a secretariat in Paris. In the end, its efforts were successful, in respect of France, Belgium and Belgrade, but were always frustrated in the case of the Netherlands and Poland.

It was in Germany that the events of the last few months of the war had the most serious results. The combined effects of the Allied offensives and of the bombing destroyed cities and communications, paralysed transport, and scattered the administrative officials. In the midst of this, entire camps were hastily emptied of PW, and these had to set out on foot and without food supplies. The task of carrying on the work of the Agency, and of bringing up relief to the millions of prisoners in Germany created a complex problem, the factors of which changed every day. The organization was hurriedly decentralized, and new delegates recruited and trained in haste. But visas and permits could only be obtained with great difficulty and transport was lacking. No sooner had five or six new delegates set out, than more were needed. In April 1945 they numbered forty. This was a large figure, compared with the strength of other delegations (there were at that time 179 delegates in all throughout the world), but insufficient for the work to be done. The ICRC succeeded, by dint of negotiation,

in despatching as a desperate measure a number of delegates who agreed to go and stay in certain concentration camps, to act as hostages, as it were, in order to save the prisoners from last moment extermination.

The capitulation of Germany did not bring order into this state of affairs immediately. Masses of German prisoners now filled the camps which the Allied PW left empty. On every hand millions of people, former deportees, displaced persons from all the once occupied countries, were waiting (and some would have to wait a long time yet) for repatriation. Food was short ; so were medical supplies and clothing.

For a time the delegates scattered throughout the country, overwhelmed with applications of all kinds and from all sides, carried out as best they could the charitable precepts of the Red Cross, with the small means at their disposal. Each one, on his own for the most part, acted as an autonomous delegation for the region where he happened to be. In contrast, the members of the delegation in Berlin, still at their post in their bombed offices, were reduced to idleness. The occupying authorities left them little scope for action and in the end, without giving any reasons, interned them in camps in Russia for some months before sending them home to Switzerland. These men, and one woman, had for years devoted themselves to giving moral encouragement and material relief to those behind the barbed wire ; day by day they had endeavoured to establish contacts between families separated by the war ; now they found themselves prisoners in their turn, without any delegates to visit them, and with no news of their relatives or of the ICRC.

Finally the work was reorganized, as far as this was possible in such chaos. Germany was divided into four separate zones, and there was no question of re-establishing a single delegation. To meet those facts, the ICRC set up four autonomous posts, one at *Frankfort on Main*, for the American Zone, with branch delegations in *Munich* and *Bayreuth* ; a second at *Vlotho*, for the British Zone ; a third at *Baden-Baden*, for the French Zone, with branch delegations at *Freiburg in Breisgau* and *Bad Kreuznach* ; and a fourth, a little later, in *Berlin*.

The same was done in Austria. In addition to the delegation in Vienna, others were opened at *Salzburg, Bregenz, Bad Gastein*, then at *Innsbruck* and *Linz*, and some time later at *Klagenfurt*.

* * *

Five years had passed since the armistice between France and Germany. Now the Allied held as many millions of prisoners as the Reich had captured at the time of that armistice. During the five years the work of the ICRC had, reckoned quantitatively, been far more extensive in behalf of Allied men than for those of the Axis Powers. The situation was now reversed. The ICRC henceforth had to concern itself in greater degree with the captives of the Allies. The delegations in the chief Allied countries were reinforced in their turn, whilst new ones were set up in the liberated countries, that is, in the *Netherlands, Denmark, Norway* and *Poland*. To turn to another region, the *Dodecanese*, a delegation was opened to issue relief to the inhabitants of these islands.

When the war ended in the Pacific, the Japanese authorities at last consented to give official recognition to those delegates whose activities so far, they had tolerated only as "private charitable work". Also it was only at this late date, between the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and that of Nagasaki, that the Tokyo delegation, whose chief had died at the beginning of 1944, received the help for which it had been waiting eighteen months. It was the first that the ICRC had succeeded in sending from Geneva since the beginning of hostilities in the Far East, in 1941. Month after month had passed before Tokyo agreed to the appointment of a successor to the Director and of an assistant delegate ; further months were taken up in negotiations and waiting for all the necessary visas ; and finally, many weeks had to be spent to reach the destination.

When the fighting ceased, the Allied Powers requested the delegations in Japan to come to the help of their fellow-countrymen, ex-prisoners of war and internees, and to prepare their repatriation. True to Red Cross principles, the delegates then turned without pause to concern themselves with the

lot of the millions of Japanese who had fallen into the hands of the victors.

5. The Post-War Period

The end of hostilities did not permit as rapid a "demobilization" as had been hoped. So long as millions of PW remained to be repatriated, they had to be looked after. In certain countries their numbers diminished and it was possible gradually to reduce the delegations. In others, on the contrary, the vast numbers of PW, their dispersal in numerous labour detachments, their state of destitution, the lack of all relief supplies from their home country and the still strained economic situation of the territories in which they were held captive, required a reinforcement of the delegations. It was then the delegation in France assumed the greatest importance.

The work of the ICRC for other classes of war victims also did not come to an end immediately. Help of every description was urgently needed to alleviate the sufferings caused by war. The ICRC gave its assistance, and that of its delegations, as long as it could. Fresh conflicts, local ones admittedly, broke out in various parts of the world, in Indonesia, Indo-China, in Greece. These too, required the despatch of delegates.

When there was an end of military operations and gradually communications were restored, it was possible to put the work on to a normal footing. Direct contact was renewed with the delegations hitherto isolated, and at last, particularly after 1946, it was possible to shut down one after the other, a good many outposts, thus foreshadowing the closing of all the remaining delegations in a world now once more restored to order.

(C). A FEW FIGURES

(a) *Staff of the permanent Delegations.*

In 1940 the number of delegations increased from three to 12, that of the delegates from three to 16. These numbers grew steadily and in 1945 reached their highest point, namely :

76 delegations and 179 delegates. In 1947, there were still 43 delegations and 106 delegates.

Between 1939 and 1947, 340 persons altogether were recruited to represent the ICRC abroad. These figures do not, of course, include the subaltern staff.

(b) *Special Missions of the ICRC.*

The special missions, carried out from Geneva by persons not members of the permanent delegations numbered 214. The detail is as follows :—

In 1939	6
In 1940	28
In 1941	20
In 1942	17
In 1943	33
In 1944	26
In 1945	28
In 1946	20
1947	16
Total	<u>194</u>

(c) *Camp visits.*

The ICRC delegates have carried out 11,175 visits to PW and civil internee camps, as follows :

In 1939	25
In 1940	200
In 1941	700
In 1942	1,000
In 1943	1,250
In 1944	1,400
In 1945	2,200
In 1946	3,300
In 1947 January to June	<u>1,100</u>
Total	<u>11,175</u>

(d) *Distances covered.*

The distances covered by the Committee's delegates by rail or road, on land, sea or air amounted to some 16,430,300 km. (roughly 10 million miles), a distance equal to 410 times round the world. Whereas the distance covered in 1939 was 30,000 km. (roughly 18,000 miles), the figure grew steadily until 1945, when it reached 4,135,000 km. (roughly 2,500,000 miles).

(D). GLIMPSES OF THE DELEGATES AT WORK

More than one ICRC delegate could, if he wished, write a stirring tale of his adventures. The reports on their missions alone would give material for an epic, telling of the tribulations of the delegates in the Far East, the mishaps which befell them, how they were arrested, released, then arrested again and subjected to endless questionings. It would relate the tragic fate of one delegate and his wife, who were arrested, tried, condemned and put to death because their executioners could not understand that their zeal to bring some measure of relief to the prisoners of war was disinterested. We hear of the wonders done by some other delegate in organizing a Christmas celebration in one of the camps ; of the invention and boldness, sometimes even cunning, which they all displayed, or of the hazardous journeys of the relief columns in Germany during the last phase of the war. The life of the delegations in the battered and besieged cities would have a part too, and many more stories besides.

If the whole tale cannot be told here, a few extracts, taken from diaries and reports, will throw light on often remarkable features of the life on service of the ICRC delegate.

In the Mediterranean, October 27, 1943, evening.

Under a leaden sky the freighter *Padua* was ploughing its way doggedly through the dark water. The holds were loaded to capacity with sacks of mail and parcels being shipped from Lisbon to Marseilles. The ICRC delegate asked the vessel's position, "Where are we, captain ? We should have passed Sète by now..."

The skipper was an old sea-dog, a Portuguese, tough and grouching and yet not insensitive. Not a landmark, not a lighthouse, not a gleam to be seen along the French coast...

Towards midnight the delegate went to his cabin and was soon fast asleep. He was awakened by a terrific explosion. He sprang from his bunk, turned the switch, but there was no light. Groping his way forward, he opened the cabin door. The water had reached the gangways ; groans and cries rent the night. A rush of water forced him back into his cabin. He was quite cool, but felt curiously detached. His mind was working clearly and he filled his lungs with all the air they could hold, then held his breath. As the sea water flooded the cabin he swam his way out. The current dragged him under water and forced him along the gangway. He reached the stern of the vessel and the companion-way leading up between decks, but he could no longer struggle against the suction of the ship which was dragging him down. It was the end.

Artificial respiration was bringing him back to life... The captain and some of the crew, whose cabins were in the forecastle had managed to cut the lashing of the life-boats. Hearing the delegate's calls for help, they had finally discovered him and fished him up, naked, as he clung to the bars of a hen-coop afloat in the water.

So he was saved, the sole survivor of the eight men in the *Padua's* stern. But there were still five miles to the shore...

Salonika, 1944.

For over a year, at an extremely awkward time, the ICRC delegation had been carrying on relief for the inhabitants of the town and province. Oppressed by the victors, the country was constantly the scene of skirmishes, assassination of members of the occupying forces, reprisals and executions. Constant vigilance was required, because of the military patrols, the partisans and the mined and destroyed roads.

As he was returning from one of these relief expeditions at the beginning of August, a delegate learned that the little town of Naoussa, situated on a plateau on a spur of the Vermion range,

had been liberated by the partisans. The Germans had fallen back to the railway station six kilometres from the town, and the population was without food. He decided to make a detour by way of Naoussa to examine the situation on the spot.

Before turning off on the Edessa road, at Verria, he gave the driver careful instructions. The road was mined in places, and it was essential not to exceed twelve miles an hour, and to slow down still further if fighting was going on between the Germans and partisans, as the sporadic shooting seemed to prove. Finally, he told him that if the car was attacked, he must stop at once.

The car went forward cautiously. The driver fixed his eyes on the road, while the other occupants kept a look-out over the country. To their left was the Salonika-Florina railway, to the right a small plain stretching to the foot of the Vermion, a stronghold of the partisans, from which the Germans had never managed to dislodge them. The travellers were now quite close to the place known as *Aghios Nicolaos*, barely two miles from Naoussa. Suddenly, a burst of firing, doubtless aimed at the car. The driver hastily pulled up, the passengers sprang out and into a ditch at the right of the road, and lay down in eight inches of water. In front of them the car was half concealed by a field of maize. That might just save the engine. The firing was coming from the direction of the partisans. Hadn't they seen the Red Cross on the car? Or did they take it for a ruse? For half an hour the bullets rained down. The car was hit; windows were broken and a tyre burst. Now the shots were coming from the other side, from the railway. The Germans in the station replying, no doubt. The travellers were caught in the cross-fire. Fortunately, the German's firing showed that they had recognized the Red Cross emblems and were trying to spare the car whilst they aimed at the partisans.

After half an hour the firing stopped suddenly. Was the skirmish really finished? Repairs were made hurriedly. The delegate decided to go on foot with his secretary to the village of Aghia Marina, three miles away. From there he would try to telephone the partisan headquarters. The car was left in the care of the driver.

Finally, at nightfall the travellers arrived at Naoussa, which was bedecked with Greek and Allied flags and where they were given a grand welcome. At partisan headquarters, apologies were made and everyone was glad that the incident had no serious consequences.

The food situation was indeed very precarious, and relief was needed. As the German had control of the Salonika-Verria-Naoussa road, there was no direct route for supplies to be brought up. But there were tracks through the mountains between Naoussa and Verria, where there was a depot of ICRC food and medical supplies. A mule train could convey them.

Paris, August 15, 1944.

The ICRC representatives had learned that the hospital at Orleans was asking urgently for medicaments, pharmaceutical stores, and special foods for diets, and that the "Stalag" was running short of food supplies.

Five tons of relief goods were loaded on to a truck furnished by the French Red Cross, and two of its men, the driver and his mate, accompanied the delegate.

The party was off next day at 15 hours. On reaching Etrechy, five miles from Etampes, the truck was stopped by SS men, who inspected the delegate's credentials for his mission. Disregarding their permit, they ordered him to return to Paris. The party made some show of acquiescence and the truck turned back. Half a mile on the road it turned off towards Douray, reached La Ferté-Alais, and then proceeded on its way towards Malesherbes, using secondary roads to by-pass the town. In the neighbourhood of Pithiviers it came out on highway 51, and continued in the direction of Orleans.

After a few wayside incidents, the travellers reached Vominbert, nears Orleans, towards 21 hours. Civilians waved and made signals to warn them that fighting was going on near by. Apparently an American armoured column had attacked Orleans that afternoon. The crackle of machine-guns could be heard, and at short intervals rifle-fire and artillery. The delegate decided to park the truck in the courtyard of a farm for the time being.

At night fall rifle-fire ceased, but the bombardment continued.

At dawn on August 17, the car pursued its way, soon reaching Orleans, where all the inhabitants, in spite of injunctions, were rejoicing and thronging the streets, which they had decked with the French and Allied colours.

At the St. Aignan Hospital the delegate was given a warm welcome by the President of the local Red Cross Committee, and by the two doctors, a French senior officer and a British captain, who had been prisoners of war. The German guard had just surrendered, and the prisoner patients had been freed. The French officer told them that on August 14, all the prisoners of war were to have been sent by train to Charleville, via Paris, but that the Resistance, warned in time, had blown up the line a few miles from Orleans. The prisoners managed to escape and hide in the woods.

The food and medical supplies were handed over to the hospital, where injured civilians were being brought in constantly. The situation was most alarming. From Olivet, a district occupied by the Germans on the left bank of the Loire, the artillery was shelling Orleans without a pause. All along the river bank the streets were under constant fire. At the request of the town authorities, the delegate and his two companions used their truck to take relief supplies to people cut off in certain quarters. Bullets whistled about their heads. German soldiers hidden on the roof-tops were firing down into the streets; Americans answered their fire, and so did the civilians. The house from which women and children were to be taken was in a street running down to the quay along the Loire, and exposed to gun-fire. A shell passed over the heads of the rescuers; civilians shouted, but all the occupants were unharmed.

In the afternoon the bombardment stopped. His work done, the delegate decided to return to Paris. He called at American headquarters, where a Colonel received him very courteously and asked him to remain in Orleans until the Allies arrived in Paris.

"Is that an order, Sir?" the delegate asked. "No, but it's for your own sake."

The Red Cross representative thanked him, then pointed out on the map the route he wished to follow. They showed him approximately the positions of the spearheads of the American armoured columns along the road to Pithiviers. The three men started off at once for the capital, which they reached in the afternoon of the following day, after an eventful journey.

Germany, February, 1945.

Military events on the Eastern front had led the German authorities to move the prisoner camps from the regions threatened by the Russian advance and place them nearer the centre of the Reich. The withdrawal was made in headlong haste. In long columns, the exhausted men were obliged to make forced marches, often sustained by only a single slice of bread daily. They suffered from cold, as well as hunger, and hundreds died by the roadside in the Government General of Poland or the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

After many attempts, the delegation in Berlin at last succeeded in finding out the route these columns were following and the approximate time-tables. It got permission to try and reach them with supplies. Plans were made for transport by road. Simultaneously an attempt would be made to send parcels by rail, to reach them at certain points on the way. One column, marching towards Carlsbad and Marienbad, was reported ; it included about fifteen thousand prisoners of war, mostly British, together with three to four thousand Russians, whom, in theory, the ICRC was unable to help.

One delegate was given the task of taking four truck-loads of parcels, which had been held up at Weissenfels near Leipzig, to Carlsbad and Marienbad. This was his story :

"We set off towards Weissenfels, along the autostradas constantly patrolled by the formidable "Tiefflieger" ¹. The little 5 h.p. car did marvels. It even climbed, without chains, the snowy passes of the Sudeten mountains, though not, sometimes, without the help of a sturdy horse, and thanks also to

¹ Aircraft, hedge-hopping and dive bombing, ordered to patrol the railways day and night.

the driver, a man of skill as well as of never failing good humour—one of the most precious qualities you can have in war time.

“In my pocket was a special pass from GHQ of the Armed Forces of the Interior, under whose authority the prisoners of war had recently been placed. This document gave formal permission to supply food to prisoners of war on the march, and requested all civil and military authorities to assist in this task. It would help me to use persuasion when meeting officers behind the lines who wanted to abide strictly by regulations. For instance, the commandant at Weissenfels refused to hand over the parcels for the prisoners, on the grounds that he had not received orders to do so. Waved my pass and threatened to return to Berlin forthwith, unless he gave the necessary orders immediately to arrange for their transport to Carlsbad. The threat went home. Next, I tackled the railways. There was a shortage of rolling stock and only the transport of vital war supplies was allowed. Once more, scared them declaring I would go off to Berlin at once to complain to those who gave me the permit. Within a few hours, cars were found, loaded, sent on their way towards Carlsbad under responsible military escort (for thefts were already frequent) and some were even coupled to passenger trains. They arrived in time, after only four days’ journey. A real achievement it was for a line badly knocked about by constant Allied bombing.

At Carlsbad, military HQ responsible for the PW columns ordered a forty-eight hours’ rest and the prisoners were quartered in neighbouring villages within a distance of about six miles. Trucks were found to distribute the relief supplies. Needless to say how we found the petrol, except that the method resembled rather closely that of the black market gentlemen.

At last the moment came for the distribution. Each of the Allied camp leaders had received their share, and I wanted to see them give out the supplies. The sight really defied description. Imagine men who had been on the march for five weeks, in the snow and cold, on empty stomachs, with feet bleeding. That is no exaggeration, but the actual, brutal truth. Now they were each going to receive eleven pounds weight of supplies, including 100 cigarettes, a tin of powdered

coffee, biscuits, meat, chocolate, soap. Their delight at these gifts which seemed to have descended from the skies was rapturous ; they had to be stopped from stuffing themselves with the whole lot at once. The scene was too much, and I left them to get on with the distribution alone.

The next day a British R.A.M.C. Major told me that his men sang as they covered the last few miles before the distribution. The Red Cross had arrived—they were saved ! And the next day, too, passing alongside the column which was on the march again, I saw it wreathed in a cloud of smoke from thousands of cigarettes. The British camp leaders had not forgotten the Russians, who had received one parcel for every three men.

That day I realized more than ever before what a great privilege it is to act as delegate. An easy task, because one never asks anything for oneself, one is always doing something for neighbours in distress. I realized too, that material help that saves the body goes with the encouragement that raises men's spirits. The British Major whom I have mentioned, confirmed this by telling me that the very word that we had arrived gave new strength to the whole column. They no longer felt themselves abandoned in enemy country, under the cold eye of armed guards, a prey to the cruelty of some. The Red Cross had succeeded in tracking them, and hope was reborn.

April, 1945 in Vienna.

The city was encircled and on fire. It was being battered by "Stalin's barrel organs", the famous Russian guns. Street fighting had begun in the suburbs. Soviet planes were all the time on reconnaissance duty in the incredibly blue spring sky. For some days the ICRC representatives had been living in cellars, without water, proper shelter, or hot food. Civilians crowded round their doorway, women, young girls, children, a few old people, asking for shelter and protection. All squeezed in and huddled together with us.

A shell fell on the house opposite, the injured came to ask for help. A dressing station was improvised with haphazard gear. Several volunteers, young Frenchmen, "conscript workers", and Austrians, undertook a search among the still smoking

wreckage. In a half demolished room they found an old man, badly hurt, beside the dead body of his wife. He was carried back to the first aid station, where he was nursed and his life saved.

This episode was hardly over, when again there was a knocking on the door of the refuge. This time it was a woman about to give birth to her child. A Dutch doctor, a deportee, examined her. He gave his opinion, she could only be saved by a Caesarean operation. But there were no surgical instruments, only a pair of scissors and forceps, from a small first aid kit. Outside the battle was raging and the nearest hospital was half an hour away. The discussion was carried on by candle-light. Volunteers came forward, offering to risk the trip to the hospital. They decided to take the chance. In the darkness, the bold trip succeeded. The operation was performed, and mother and child saved.

But the fighting was coming nearer. It had now reached the street of the shelter. A Russian soldier, seeing the Red Cross emblem, brought in his officer who had been hit by machine-gun fire at point-blank range, and was dying. It was a hopeless case, but all the same the officer was taken to a German military hospital. The next day the soldier came for news. As he didn't see his officer in the shelter, he accused the delegates of making away with him and threatened them with his revolver. So the delegate, with the soldier's weapon against his ribs, went along to the hospital. There he learned that the officer had died. Fortunately for the delegate, a Russian prisoner patient saw what had happened, and intervened. The soldier was shown the body of his officer and the marks of the operation by which they had tried to save him at the last moment. The soldier burst into tears and kissed the hands of the man whom he had been threatening to kill only a moment before.

On the way back, a man whom the ICRC delegate had taken under his protection was hit by a fragment of a shell which burst over their heads. His injuries, apparently superficial, became infected and three hours later he was dead. The delegate hadn't even a scratch.

However, Vienna had fallen. The most amazing rumours were flying round. The authorities had vanished, everyone was

a law unto himself. People came to the delegation one after the other, for hours on end. The mere sight of the Red Cross emblem aroused boundless hopes, sometimes foolish ones. A man came to ask the delegate to arrange to send him to South America as quickly as possible ; another insisted that he should take his race-horse under his protection.

Rhodes (Dodecanese), February 10, 1945.

On a cold morning, the famished inhabitants of the town were awakened by the ringing of all the church bells. The weather was wild and stormy, the sea rough.

The quay-side was thronged by thousands of beings, either skeletons, or swollen by hunger œdema. With emaciated arms they were pointing out to sea where three, four, and then five large boats were emerging from the mist and skimming over the waves with all their canvas spread. The only flag they displayed was that of the Red Cross, hoisted high on the mast-head and smacking in the wind. By agreement with both parties, the ICRC had been, at long last, permitted to bring food supplies to the famine-stricken Dodecanese Islands, which had been going through a time of untold distress.

A great shout went up from the crowd, borne by the wind to the sailors on board.

In the bows of the leading vessel the delegate and his assistant peered wide-eyed at the scene, not yet understanding.

The walls of the town, quays, streets and windows were black with people. Hundreds of Swiss flags were flown alongside the Greek colours. The bells pealed incessantly.

A cutter belonging to the occupying authorities left the harbour ; the ships took in sail and with the greatest caution, threatened their way through the mine-fields surrounding the island. The shouts had ceased. Everyone was watching with a strained attention—would they hit a mine ?

The ships no longer answered the helm and tried in vain to follow the cutter, which from time to time was hidden by huge waves. At last, after about an hour, the convoy entered the harbour. The cargo was safe. The shouting resumed,

songs were taken up ; the crowds threw thousands of flowers into the sea.

German officers were there to meet the travellers, who were drenched by the waves and exhausted by ten days' buffeting of the seas. The crowd breaking through the barriers, swarmed round the visitors, embracing them and carrying them shoulder-high in triumph.

One delegate had a dislocated shoulder, and his colleague was ill and had to be operated on on the following day. But their mission was accomplished.

Germany, 1945.

On April 27, 1945, one of the Committee's delegates was travelling between Uffing and Moosburg. He had learnt during the night, at Moosburg, that a convoy of political detainees was in the neighbourhood, marching on the high road. He set out immediately, and discovered them about midday. Permission having been given to issue the foodstuffs on his lorry, the guards were ordered to keep off the mass of the detainees who were ordered to march past in single file to take their share. After receiving their parcels, the men went to the adjoining fields and started to eat !

It was an almost incredible scene : a mixed crowd of Russians, French and Poles, many of whom threw themselves on the food like wolves. The guards experienced the greatest difficulty in keeping back the crowd and preventing the entire truck-load from being pillaged and dispersed. Some of the detainees, however, showed strict discipline in standing aside and awaiting their turn. Some had lost an arm and had but one wounded hand, bound up in a few dirty rags. Seizing the parcel with their stumps they breathed a few words of thanks in some strange language.

These creatures, all emaciated and verminous, their eyes deep sunk in their sockets, trembled in anticipation. They were going, for once to eat their fill.

Although talking was strictly prohibited, one Frenchman managed to whisper as he passed "Major So-and-so, tell my wife at Nantes".

The endless procession continued. All these people came from Buchenwald. They had been on the road for twenty days, and had had nothing to eat for the last five days.

We close this short account by quotations from the report of a Delegate, who successfully carried out various relief schemes in behalf of the populations who were encircled in the German "pockets" along the Atlantic coast, after the Allied landing in France. The delegate was then instructed to convey relief supplies to Allied prisoners of war at Dunkirk; he was to enter the "pocket", which included about 18 miles of sea coast and was roughly 10 miles in depth, and to reach the town which had been entirely cut off from the outside world since October 1944.

On reaching Allied H. Q., the responsible British Officers smiled in doubt and surprise at the Delegate's plan. On learning that a wireless application to the German Commander at Dunkirk had been sent from Lorient by the Committee's representative and that the latter had received permission to enter the town via Lon-Plage, the British were convinced that the scheme was feasible.

The following remarks are taken from the Delegate's diary :

On the following morning, left by car with three officers ; on the way, crossed endless columns of enormous tanks returning from the lines in clouds of dust. Soon reached the road leading straight on between two rows of poplars as far as the German lines, about two kilometres distant.

The British officers advised me to walk, as far as possible, in the middle of the road and not to venture into the ditches on either side where I might, they said, hit upon unpleasant booby-traps. They then left me, wishing me good luck.

Walked along the road carrying my attaché case in one hand and a large Red Cross flag over my shoulder. Before leaving, the British officers had promised that there would be no artillery fire directed towards the zone where I was to cross the lines at about 4 p.m., but that I must at all events have crossed by that time. To begin with, everything went well ; the tanks had left deep marks in the road, which were adequate guides ; from time to time, to left and right, outposts were visible,

lurking behind trees or ruined walls ; machine-gun fire and single shots from time to time. The position grew worse as soon as the tracks stopped ; the road was now sown with shell splinters and debris thrown up by explosions. A few yards further, a dead horse lay across the road, with swarms of flies. The road had been cleared of trees and the stillness was disquieting. I kept straight on, however, always along the middle of the road, as I had been advised. Soon reached an American car, almost entirely destroyed, and about 200 metres further a burnt-out tank which completely blocked the road. Doubtful as to what to do, waved my flag and called out, but elicited no reply. Finally decided to walk round the tank with all due care and without touching anything. A few yards further the road was strewn with what seemed to be mole hills, though the metallic sheen of mines was clearly visible. Thought that I had really reached the German lines, and could go no further ; waved my flag again and shouted in German, asking that someone should come to meet me. No answer, except an occasional rifle shot. On the point of turning back, when two German soldiers came out of heap of ruins in which the road had entirely disappeared about 300 yards further on. The two men came towards me by a roundabout route. Briefly explained to them who I was, what I wished to do, that I was expected by the German HQ at Dunkirk, and asked to be taken there. They agreed and told me to follow, stepping exactly in their tracks. Suddenly one of them said "But we have forgotten to blindfold him according to orders". Having blindfolded me, each man took me by an arm and we continued our progress for about half a mile. Felt that the ground was very rough, but had no idea of where we were. Suddenly on reaching more even ground one of the men said "Look out now, you'll have to get on the back seat of this motorbike". Holding my attaché case in my arms I got in the back seat, still blindfolded. Anyone who has tried to ride a motorbike in such conditions knows it is a very unpleasant business, because you always lean the wrong way and at every instant feel as if you were falling off. At length, we halted and I was led into a building and the handkerchief untied ; we were in the HQ of the company occupying this

sector. Was told that a car would be available in a few minutes, meanwhile the German officers asked me to share their meal, but my appetite was none too good after these various incidents. However, they insisted on my swallowing an omelette which proved so indigestible that it must have been made with Diesel oil... Rations were extremely short at that time in Dunkirk, and the German soldiers themselves were none too stout. A few minutes afterwards the car was ready ; blindfolded again, and off we went.

On the way loud reports shook the car—a couple of Allied shells had just fallen a few yards off. At last reached H.Q. Dunkirk and was received by the C.O. Was then told that the answer to my wire had been garbled : to enter Dunkirk I should have waited for a momentary suspension of fire : the place where I had stopped on the road was already about 300 yards inside the mine field ; both the American car and the burnt-out tank were stuffed with explosives and if I had been unfortunate enough to touch anything I should not have had the pleasure of writing this diary.

All these incidents were quickly forgotten, and three days later, after successful negotiations, I was able to enter the Dunkirk prison with four tons of relief supplies. The Allied prisoners of war for whom the supplies were intended, received me with loud cheers for the Red Cross. Their excitement at making contact with the outside world after being entirely cut off during six months is a thing which your delegate can never forget.

IV. Finances ¹

(A). GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the years immediately preceding the second World War, the financial position of the ICRC was somewhat precarious. Its resources were made up of voluntary contributions from National Red Cross Societies and revenue from its own invested capital and its Endowment Fund.

Although several International Red Cross Conferences had passed recommendations urging on National Societies to increase their financial support to the ICRC, contributions from these Societies during the years 1920 to 1939 provided only 44 per cent of its income, and covered only 38 per cent of its expenditure.

The Endowment Fund, a separate trust, was constituted in 1931 (ICRC Trust) by a donation of 500,000 francs from the Swiss Confederation, and was added to the already existing trust fund of 386,000 francs. This trust fund only reached a million francs when the Nobel Prize was awarded to the ICRC in 1945. Despite the recommendations of the International Conferences, neither Governments nor National Societies helped to increase it in any marked degree, and the ICRC only had at its disposal the income from this trust fund, amounting to some 24,000 francs per annum.

¹ For reasons of accountancy, it has been necessary to close the present report on the finances of the ICRC as on December 31, 1946, and not on June 30, 1947. The financial period for 1947 will be dealt with in a chapter of the Report on the work of the ICRC from July 1, 1947 to June 30, 1948.

These two sources of income were never sufficient during this period to cover the expenditure of the ICRC, which did not, however, exceed the modest average of 130,000 francs per annum. The ICRC was therefore obliged to use the slender capital it had accumulated after the first World War and which, early in 1939, only amounted to about 163,000 francs.

When the second World War broke out, the ICRC would have been unable to start its activities, and in particular the immediate organization of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, without a loan of 200,000 francs which it sought from the Swiss Confederation, and a similar sum subscribed during the summer of 1939 by Swiss business concerns. In this manner, the ICRC was able, in 1939, to cover its still modest requirements, which amounted on an average to about 15,000 francs monthly. In 1940, a collection taken in Switzerland made it possible to balance its budget. At the beginning of the following year, about three-quarters of its resources derived from Switzerland.

In general, the resources of the ICRC during the second World War were composed of donations from Governments, National Red Cross Societies, organizations, business concerns and private donors, and of collections made in Switzerland. When appealing for financial assistance, the ICRC always maintained the principle of refusing contributions which the donors wished to be earmarked to meet the cost of some particular undertaking. The aim of this policy was to assert the Committee's complete independence and the neutral significance of its undertakings, which formed a whole and depended one on the other for being put into effect.

In the war years there was a considerable increase in the Committee's running costs. Whereas, at the end of 1939, they scarcely exceeded 100,000 francs, they had in 1941 risen to about three million francs, and in 1945 reached their peak of seventeen millions and a half, that is nearly a million and a half per month. From 1939 to December 31, 1946, the ICRC had spent a total of about 55 million francs to carry out its humanitarian work, without taking into account the cost of the Relief Departments, which amounted to over fifteen million francs, and was borne by the National Societies and Governments

concerned ¹. It should be noted, in this connection that this outlay of fifteen millions enabled the ICRC to forward relief supplies of all descriptions for a total value of over 3,000 million Swiss francs.

The sum which the ICRC expended during *six years* of war amounted to about 55 million Swiss francs. When compared with the sum total of war expenditure of all the belligerents, it equals the cost of *six hours* of the war!

The annual balance sheets of the ICRC for 1942 and 1943 alone show a relatively important credit balance remaining at the disposal of the Committee. The difficulties encountered during these years, however, by most of the delegations abroad in sending their accounts to Geneva (which could not be entered in the Committee's books before the documents were received) meant that these credit balances, calculated without those particular items, were purely fictitious. Further, the ICRC was obliged to make advances, sometimes amounting to several millions, to National Societies, and even to some Governments, to meet expenditure for which they were directly responsible, incurred for relief operations and for transmission of messages by post, cable or radiotelegram. The ICRC charged neither interest nor commission on these advances, although they represented direct expenditure.

From 1944, these credits rapidly diminished, on account of the development in the Committee's activities as the war reached its climax.

In 1945, the financial situation of the ICRC began to be very critical. Although its activities showed no decline, its principal sources of revenue were decreasing, and in some cases were completely exhausted. The contributions of the Italian Government were suspended after the 1943 armistice, and the regular grants by Germany and Japan ceased on the capitulation of these two Powers. Large remittances placed at the disposal of the ICRC by the Japanese and German Governments shortly before the end of the war were frozen by the financial measures taken at that time by the Allies. (The Committee still remains

¹ See Vol. III.

unaware of what will be done with the greater part of these funds.) Moreover, the majority of other Governments and National Societies who had, until this date, been the most direct source of the Committee's income, ceased their payments, or reduced them considerably in the course of 1945. At the end of the financial year 1945, the available credit balance amounted only to 200,000 francs, apart from a sum set aside to underwrite certain important risks still outstanding. The Committee, therefore, emerged from the war years just as poor as it was at the outset.

Subscribers doubtless believed that, as the war had come to an end and fighting zones which only neutrals had been able to cross no longer existed, the ICRC could immediately close down its services. Unfortunately, the countless ills which the war had brought in its train did not cease with the end of the fighting. Had the Committee closed its work at too early a date, it would have failed in its duty. Millions of PW were still held in captivity; their number was even greater than at the peak of the conflict. As the Protecting Powers considered their mandate at an end, the ICRC was henceforth practically the only body able to help these men. The occupation of the defeated countries called for a neutral intermediary, and it was only by slow degrees that living conditions became any easier for the civil populations.

The interventions of the ICRC, entirely humanitarian and impartial, should be in the first place based on the moral and physical needs of the various classes of war victims. The Committee has, indeed, at no time believed that it should make its services depend on the funds at its disposal at any given moment, nor on the reciprocity, simultaneous or successive, of interests of the belligerents concerned. Further, the Committee could not feel free to give up its activities so long as Powers still holding PW, and occupying authorities or governments of liberated states agreed to its intervention, or begged, maybe, for its help. The ICRC considered that its work from the outbreak of the war until it ended, and during the aftermath, as a complete whole.

However, even whilst confining its efforts to those particular

duties imposed by its tradition, and whilst practising the greatest possible economy, the Committee found itself inevitably compelled to raise funds necessary for that work. Had it not done so, great numbers of PW and other victims of the war would have lacked its help and been deprived of the benefit of much of its experience. The significance of the work to which it had applied itself since 1863 would thereby have been weakened.

An urgent appeal was therefore made to many Governments and National Red Cross Societies. In spite of some generous donations, the Committee would not have been able to meet current expenses, or even maintain its solvency, if the Swiss Confederation had not responded to its request and consented to make the necessary advances. When the financial position of the Committee was made known to the Swiss Federal Council in the autumn of 1945, the question at once received the sympathetic attention of the Federal Chambers, which immediately recognized its urgency and voted an advance of five million francs; in April 1946, this sum was increased by a further decision to seven millions and a half. Without these grants, the Committee would have been obliged at once to close the greater part of its departments, as from April 1, 1946, and to cancel all staff engagements in Switzerland and abroad.

Nevertheless, the financial position of the ICRC still remained problematical, and it could not continue to rely upon one Government for its financial requirements. In June 1946, a circular letter was sent to Governments and National Red Cross Societies, setting forth the Committee's financial position, and stressing its imperative need of funds to carry on its work.

Two months later, on the proposal of the ICRC, the Preliminary Conference of National Red Cross Societies was held in Geneva. The Committee's appeal was favourably received and, on a motion of the American Red Cross, the Conference, in a fine spirit of co-operation, decided by a unanimous vote that fifteen million Swiss francs should be placed at the Committee's disposal, until 1950, by the National Red Cross Societies. A special Commission was set up on the spot to draw up a scale of participation of each National Society respectively in the first

instalment of ten millions, to be paid before the end of 1947. This Commission, composed of members of the French, Belgian, British, Italian and Swedish Red Cross Societies, settled on a scale of contributions based as far as possible on the relative financial position of each country. The schedule was communicated to the National Societies by the French Red Cross, the representative of which was chairman of the Commission. Attention was drawn to the necessity for the contribution to be paid with as little delay as possible, if necessary with the help of Government grants or of public subscriptions.

By the end of December 1946, some National Societies had already made over their contribution to the ICRC ; others sent word that they agreed, on principle, with the scale, and that their share would be paid in the near future. The Committee expressed its gratitude to all concerned. The general result of this scheme for financing the work of the Committee and the conclusions to be drawn therefrom will only be available during 1948.

(B). RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE

In order to examine the receipts and expenditure of the ICRC a distinction should be drawn between the following items :

1. General Account of the ICRC

This account is the sequence of the accounts submitted by the ICRC in peace-time. As, however, during the past seven years the ICRC and its departments were almost exclusively engaged in war work, the items of the General Account are small, compared with those of the War Work Account.

A schedule is annexed showing the annual statements of this account from 1939 to the end of 1946.

Receipts. — These include the revenue from the Committee's investments and from the Endowment Fund, as well as contributions from National Societies, sundry donations and payments. Except in 1946, in which year the ICRC received an extra-

ordinary grant from the War Organization of the British Red Cross Society amounting to nearly two million francs, in recognition of the work accomplished by the Committee during the War, the receipts varied very slightly from one year to another.

Expenditure. — This comprises, in particular, current working costs, including the salaries of staff engaged before 1939 (which have been carried to War Work Account since 1943), subscriptions to the Central Standing Bureau of the International Relief Union and to the Information Centre for Chemical Warfare, the costs for the “*Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*”, and, in 1939, an allocation of 50,000 francs by the ICRC to the Central PW Agency to enable it to start work.

2. War Work Account

This account covers, in the first place, all expenditure on war activities (working costs of the ICRC, the Central PW Agency and delegations abroad) and, on the credit side, payments made to the ICRC for this work by belligerent and neutral Governments, National Red Cross Societies, the public and various Swiss authorities and organizations.

With regard to the expenditure and receipts of the Divisions of the ICRC engaged in material relief activities, and in land and sea transport¹, the figures have not been entered in the War Work Account, the finances of these services having been kept apart.

A distinction should be drawn in the War Work accounts between,

- (1) The funds which the ICRC had at its free disposal ;
- (2) Funds made over by donors for transmission, or for specified purchases. These monies were placed in the hands of the Committee as trustee and have no direct bearing on its financial situation. There is therefore no need to comment on them.

¹ This refers to the Divisions for Collective Relief, Pharmaceutical Supplies, Special Relief, Road Transport and Individual Relief, whose activities and finances are described in Vol. III.

As the ICRC has only received reimbursement for a certain proportion of its services (distribution of relief supplies, and forwarding of certain types of messages), the greater part of its work had to be paid for by contributions given unconditionally, but without any assurances as to the amount or the time during which the support would be granted.

The annexed schedules show (1) the fluctuations in the chief contributions made by Governments and National Societies, and (2) the proceeds of public subscriptions, and the grants made by private bodies in Switzerland.

It should be recalled that the ICRC gave initial financial support to two organizations: the *Foundation for Red Cross Transports*, for which the initial capital of 10,000 francs was provided by the Committee, and the *Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross*, for which the capital of 10,000 francs was made up of equal contributions from the Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies.

It does not seem necessary to enter here into a detailed account of the manifold expenditure incurred by the ICRC in recent years. At the end of each financial year, the Committee has submitted detailed statements of accounts to National Red Cross Societies, Governments and the principal donors, showing the curve of receipts and expenditure. These statements were also published in the " *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* ". Further, the Committee's accounts were audited during, and at the end of each financial year by qualified auditors, whose reports were also submitted by the Committee to the Governments and National Societies concerned.

Nevertheless, a few general details regarding the most important items of expenditure may be found useful.

(a) *Staff salaries*

As already stated, a great many of the staff were voluntary workers. During the first years, the salaried personnel were paid on a very low basis. Later, the continual increase in the cost of living and the lengthening period of the war made a general rise in salaries necessary which, however, only became effective for the majority of the staff in 1944.

As on December 31	Salaried staff in Switzerland and abroad	Average salary for each member and per month
1939	85	—
1940	726	120
1941	802	120
1942	1096	200
1943	1391	250
1944	1725	315
1945	1571	360
1946	799	400

(b) *Delegations and missions*

The work of the ICRC made it necessary to open a number of delegations abroad, and to appoint many delegates. These delegations made it possible for the Committee to extend beyond measures its effective work for the victims of the war : at the same time, they entailed large expense, which accounted for fully one-third of the whole of the Committee's expenditure from 1939 to the end of 1946.

(c) *Central PW Agency*

The provision of funds for the Agency were assured by the ICRC from its general receipts. A numerous staff and the most varied installation and equipment involved fairly large expenditure. It should be noted, however, that these costs would have been very much greater had the ICRC not been able to use, from 1939 to the end of 1946, the Hollerith Machines generously lent by Mr. T.J. Watson, of the International Business Machines Corporation ¹.

(d) *Rents*

As already stated, the authorities of the City and Canton of Geneva, with great generosity, put at the disposal of the ICRC, rent free, most of the premises which were gradually required. The rent charges the Committee saved in this way amounted to over one million francs.

¹ For supplementary details see Vol. II.

(e) *Telegrams*

From 1942, practically all communications with the outside world were cut, and the ICRC had then to make an ever-increasing use of the telegraph. Until the summer of 1942 the charges for telegrams sent by the Committee (the majority of which directly concerned National Societies or Governments) were entirely borne by itself.

In view of the great increase in this expenditure, the ICRC could no longer put off a decision to charge the cost of telegrams in future to the bodies and persons concerned. The Committee had, however, to meet the amounts due to the Swiss postal authorities, and to advance the funds required for this purpose. The refunds were only made after long delay, and some accounts had in fact still not been settled by June 30, 1947.

In order to simplify and to speed up the payment of accounts due to the Committee for telegraphic transmission of lists of PW and civilian internees, a system called "Collect Account", (which until then had not been employed in international exchanges with Switzerland) was adopted; it worked from 1942 until January 1947 in the following manner.

The companies (transmitting and receiving) entered into an agreement whereby the addressee, duly recognized by both administrations, guaranteed the payment of charges on arrival, and was responsible for these charges to the receiving company. Senders could thus transmit telegrams without paying the costs, which were borne by the addressees. This system was only in force for certain Governments and National Red Cross Societies.

While the "Collect Account" proved satisfactory, the ICRC was obliged, as for ordinary telegrams, to advance large sums, the refunding of which was, in some cases, only made after a long delay.

At the end of 1944, an agreement was made between the Committee, the Japanese Government and certain Allied Governments, for the exchange by telegram of family messages, of not more than 10 words, between PW in Japanese hands and their next of kin, through the intermediary of the ICRC. The charges for telegrams sent from Japan were paid on their arrival

at Geneva by the ICRC, who forwarded the message and invoiced the amounts to the National Societies concerned.

In the same manner, these Societies paid telegram costs as far as Geneva and were debited by the Committee for transmission charges to Japan. This wireless telegram service ceased in August 1945, and was financed from funds previously handed to the ICRC for the purpose by the National Societies and Governments concerned. Over 150,000 wireless telegrams were transmitted by this arrangement.

From 1939 to 1946, the ICRC Telegraph Service handled telegrams which cost in all, over six million Swiss francs, without including those sent through the "Collect Account".

(C). TREASURY DEPARTMENT

In early September 1939, the Committee's finances and accountancy were dealt with by a staff of four people, under the direction of one of the Committee members, acting as Treasurer. This small section rapidly grew in numbers, and by the end of 1943, the staff had increased to thirty. There followed the appointment of an executive, called the "Financial and Administrative Department", which was the responsibility, at first of the Treasurer of the ICRC and later (when the Central Management was set up at the beginning of 1946) of a Director-Delegate. At this time, the Department included 60 members, engaged in correspondence, book-keeping, delegation accounts, money transfers, money orders, telegrams, statistics and filing.

The Treasury Department would have grown to far greater proportions, had not independent accounts sections under the control of the Treasury been organized in the principal Relief Divisions.

The chief duties of the Treasury consisted in receiving the funds sent to the ICRC and in notifying the Divisions concerned of their receipt, in settling accounts on behalf of the said Divisions and, generally speaking, in effecting all movements of funds required by the Committee's work. The Treasury also supervised income and expenditure in respect of overhead charges.

Among these duties, two items call for more detailed explanation and comment : they are (1) the transmission of funds for relief, and (2) the transfer of funds to the delegations of the ICRC :

(1) *Transmission of Funds for Relief*

Whereas the transmission of funds for collective relief, (money sent to groups of PW, civilian internees or other war victims), was dealt with by the Special Relief and the Far East Divisions¹, transfers of relief funds to third parties were handled by the Treasury. These remittances, forwarded by post or through a bank (when available), or through the Committee's delegations, were very numerous, being about 100,000 from 1939 to the end of 1946. The total figures were as follows :

1939	Fr. 9,152.94
1940	„ 209,565.61
1941	„ 394,639.82
1942	„ 496,535.47
1943	„ 683,293.79
1944	„ 1,091,054.83
1945	„ 1,440,307.55
1946	„ 869,358.87
	<u>Fr. 5,193,908.88</u>

(2) *Transmission of funds to the Delegations*

The Committee often met with the greatest difficulties in sending to its delegations abroad the money required for their current expenses and maintenance, as well as the funds needed to purchase locally considerable relief supplies for victims of the war. The belligerents lost no time in tightening their economic and monetary restrictions. The freezing of funds, the difficulty of obtaining the necessary permits, and restrictions of every kind entailed applications without number, and retarded and

¹ See below Chapter on Far East (par. 6) and Vol. III.

seriously hampered the work of the Delegations. These restrictions had also their effect in neutral countries, which were obliged in their turn to take protective measures. It should, however, be recorded that both the Swiss Federal authorities and the Swiss banks showed great understanding of the Committee's difficulties, and helped to promote many of these operations. The Committee had, nevertheless, on some occasions, to devise new methods in order to meet the calls on its services. At the end of 1944, for instance, when postal and telegraphic communications with Rumania and Hungary had broken down, the Delegations in these countries had to fall back on the issue of a certain number of certificates, in order to obtain locally the funds they could no longer receive from Geneva, and which were necessary for financing their work ¹.

Arrangements for transferring funds to the Delegations in the Far East became extremely difficult from 1944, in which year the Japanese Government decreed that remittances to individuals in countries and territories occupied by their forces must in future be sent first to Tokyo, and no longer direct to the addressees. Further, this Government demanded that funds remitted in Swiss francs for the various delegations of the ICRC in the Far East should be paid out in local currency, at an arbitrary rate of exchange fixed by the Japanese themselves. This proceeding greatly reduced the purchasing power of the available funds and also caused delay which much impeded relief work, since the delegates in occupied territories were unable, through lack of money, to make immediate purchases of essential goods at a time when prices were constantly rising. To meet the situation, they decided to make arrangements with private persons and local firms, who placed large sums at their disposal. These measures, which the delegates took at very great risk, forestalled considerable loss to donors and made it possible to purchase and distribute without delay large quantities of goods for the benefit of PW and civilian internees held in these areas.

¹ For further details see Vol. III (Special Relief Division.)

LIST OF ANNEXED SCHEDULES ¹

1. *General Account*. — Receipts and expenditure for the financial periods 1938 to the end of 1946.
2. *General Account*. — Contributions by National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies from 1939 to the end of 1946.
3. *War Work Account*. — Receipts and expenditure from September 1, 1939, to December 31, 1946.
4. *War Work Account*. — Working costs incurred in Geneva from 1939 to the end of 1946.
5. *War Work Account*. — Government grants from 1939 to the end of 1946.
6. *War Work Account*. — Grants from National Red Cross Societies from 1939 to the end of 1946.
7. Total contributions by various countries (Governments and Red Cross Societies), from 1938 to the end of 1946.

¹ For technical reasons of accounting the schedules relative to the General Account (Nos. 1 and 2) and that which sets out the results of this account (No. 7) also include the financial period of 1938.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE

GENERAL

	1938	1939	1940
	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.
RECEIPTS :			
Revenue from investments ICRC . . .	10,782.40	8,745.45	8,313.05
Revenue from Foundation for ICRC. . .	28,805.65	28,688,—	28,642.50
Donations and Sundry Receipts (including gift from the Vatican = 42,500 fr.)	3,154.77	26,202,—	29,483.19
Contributions of Red Cross Societies (see 2.)	98,054.24	80,453.33	77,406.26
Special contribution British Red Cross			
Actual Receipts	140,797.06	144,088.78	143,845,—
Withdrawn from ICRC funds		62,092.35	
Carried forward			
Totals	140,797.06	206,181.13	143,845,—
EXPENDITURE :			
Administrative expenses	101,361.36	119,954.65	105,035.80
U.I.S. Central Permanent Office. . .	7,612.75	7,308,—	7,308,—
"Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge"	6,500.—	5,500.—	8,500.—
Research Centre on Chemical Warfare	1,680.65	2,000.—	1,865.70
Fund for XVIIth Conference		5,000.—	5,000.—
Mission to Moscow	10,000.20		
XVIth Conference	24,603.75		
Various missions	721.45	3,032.55	9,175.60
War Work Account		50,000.—	
Sundries		786.76	
Actual Expenditure	152,480.16	193,581.96	136,885.10
Transfer to ICRC Funds . . .			
Deficits carried forward	152,480.16	193,581.96	136,885.10
Deficits to be carried forward	916.07	12,599.17	
Credit carried forward	— 12,599.17		6,959.90
TOTALS	140,797.06	206,181.13	143,845,—

ANNUAL FINANCIAL PERIODS 1939 TO 1946

ACCOUNT

1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.
8,521.65	8,603.20	10,083.35	10,037.45	12,784.55	20,078.85
27,661.95	28,161.60	28,755.15	23,077.55	27,000.75	24,094.05
15,119.18	15,860.96	11,408.65	30,556.53	97,023.25	63,477.60
54,810.43	80,856.23	64,954.72	54,801.79	70,770.29	55,083.64
					1,989,500.—
106,113.21	133,481.99	115,201.87	118,473.32	207,578.84	2,152,234.14
6,959.90			56,439.61		
113,481.99	133,481.99	115,201.87	174,912.93	207,578.84	2,152,234.14
87,992.37	145,825.51	17,208.57	16,825.94	27,062.64	34,626.64
5,785.50		2,674.90			
4,700.—	9,600.—	3,000.—	1,000.—		8,000.—
1,925.40	1,925.—	1,925.—	1,925.—	1,800.—	1,800.—
5,000.—	5,000.—	5,000.—	5,000.—	5,000.—	5,000.—
4,923.50		85.27		350.—	6,899.01
2,746.34			25,369.70		
113,073.11	162,350.51	29,893.74	50,120.64	34,212.64	56,325.65
			124,792.29	173,366.20	2,095,908.49
113,073.11	162,350.51	29,893.74	174,912.93	207,578.84	2,152,234.14
	— 28,868.52	28,868.52			
		56,439.61			
113,073.11	133,481.99	115,201.87	174,912.93	207,578.84	2,152,234.14

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

GENERAL

	1938 Sw. Fr.	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.
Albania	350.—	336.—	—	—
Belgium	—	2,947.—	—	—
Brazil	1,186.97	—	—	—
Bulgaria	—	1,098.90	1,000.—	1,564.94
Canada	873.—	1,105.—	4,934.86	—
Chile	—	1,800.—	—	871.50
Costa-Rica	108.75	—	—	—
Cuba	330.—	—	223.—	214.—
Czechoslovakia	—	1,058.95	—	—
Danzig	150.—	150.—	—	—
Denmark	1,450.68	1,850.14	1,690.75	1,665.—
Dominican Republic	871.—	—	434.78	—
Ecuador	100.—	—	100.—	200.—
Egypt	547.05	—	894.80	—
Eire	—	—	—	3,455.—
Esthonia	—	224.85	—	—
Finland	1,431.30	1,367.37	1,318.10	1,295.34
France	2,422.—	2,346.—	—	—
Germany	13,105.50	4,005.—	3,926.25	3,870.—
Great Britain	4,399.50	3,643.50	—	—
Greece	472.44	475.43	433.50	—
Guatemala	84.30	69.85	52.35	186.75
Hungary	—	400.—	—	—
India	1,620.—	1,525.—	—	2,560.—
Iran	—	696.93	700.—	—
Iceland	—	—	—	—
Italy	4,281.75	—	4,338.60	4,290.05
Japan	10,000.—	10,000.—	10,000.—	10,000.—
Latvia	500.—	1,329.—	—	—
Lithuania	800.—	—	—	—
Mexico	—	—	—	1,072.50
Netherlands	2,403.50	2,403.27	2,371.35	243.35
Netherlands East Indies	—	—	—	1,137.—
Norway	2,326.50	1,492.54	1,475.01	1,474.50
Peru	227.80	—	80.—	—
Poland	1,647.20	1,666.50	2,702.50	—
Rumania	153.15	766.30	608.90	—
San Salvador	—	—	1,016.—	—
Siam (Thailand)	1,536.35	—	1,272.—	1,236.—
South Africa	211.90	204.60	174.—	—
Sweden	2,229.—	2,127.—	2,120.—	2,049.50
Switzerland	800.—	800.—	1,000.—	1,000.—
Turkey	10,476.—	10,264.20	9,757.95	—
United States	21,740.—	22,300.—	13,365.—	12,900.—
U.S.S.R.	7,218.60	—	8,916.56	3,525.—
Yugoslavia	2,000.—	2,000.—	2,500.—	—
TOTALS.	98,054.24	80,453.33	77,406.26	54,810.43

TO ICRC, FROM 1938 TO END 1946

ACCOUNT

1942 Sw. Fr.	1943 Sw. Fr.	1944 Sw. Fr.	1945 Sw. Fr.	1946 Sw. Fr.	Totals Sw. Fr.
—	1,062.92	694.45	—	—	2,443.37
1,384.15	2,800.—	3,000.—	—	2,985.—	13,116.15
—	1,793.75	—	4,159.82	1,913.50	9,054.04
—	4,694.82	—	5,000.—	—	13,358.66
28,939.20	—	—	—	—	35,852.06
—	623.10	520.80	1,052.84	500.—	5,368.24
—	—	—	—	—	108.75
—	—	—	—	—	167.—
—	—	—	—	—	1,058.95
—	—	—	—	—	300.—
1,801.48	1,801.48	1,801.48	1,801.48	1,789.07	15,651.56
—	—	—	—	1,290.—	2,595.78
100.—	—	—	—	42.50	542.50
—	—	—	—	—	1,441.85
—	—	—	—	8,637.50	12,092.50
—	—	—	—	—	224.85
1,275.—	1,275.—	1,275.—	1,275.—	3,000.—	13,512.11
—	—	—	—	—	4,768.—
3,870.—	5,160.—	—	10,320.—	—	44,256.75
—	—	—	—	1,989,500.—	1,997,543.—
—	—	—	—	6,502.50	7,883.87
189.45	—	187.65	—	193.50	963.85
200.—	1,006.65	—	—	—	1,606.65
1,260.—	1,260.—	1,260.—	1,260.—	1,241.10	11,986.10
—	—	—	—	600.—	1,996.93
—	—	1,000.—	—	—	1,000.—
—	6,200.—	—	—	—	19,110.40
20,000.—	9,975.—	10,000.—	—	—	79,975.—
—	—	—	—	—	1,829.—
—	—	—	—	—	800.—
—	—	—	—	1,720.—	2,792.50
1,147.90	—	—	2,295.80	—	10,865.17
—	—	—	—	—	1,137.—
2,949.05	—	2,949.05	2,949.05	5,166.67	20,782.37
—	200.—	—	2,150.—	4,232.30	6,890.10
1,392.—	1,400.—	1,400.—	—	—	10,208.20
—	—	673.10	—	—	2,201.45
—	—	—	—	390.—	1,406.—
—	—	794.06	—	—	4,838.41
—	—	—	—	—	590.50
2,052.—	2,052.—	2,050.—	2,049.—	4,100.—	20,828.50
1,000.—	1,000.—	1,000.—	1,000.—	1,000.—	8,600.—
9,771.—	9,780.—	9,780.—	9,770.20	9,780.—	79,379.35
—	12,870.—	12,900.—	25,687.10	—	121,762.10
3,525.—	—	3,516.20	—	—	26,701.36
—	—	—	—	—	6,500.—
80,856.23	64,954.72	54,801.79	70,770.29	2,044,583.64	2,626,690.93

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE FROM WAR WORK

RECEIPTS	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.
Grants from Governments (see Schedule 5)	200,000.—	348,333.36	946,302.95
Grants from National Red Cross Societies (see Schedule 6)	5,721.16	263,503.95	465,328.01
Grants from corporations, firms and private individuals	22,340.09	489,912.28	286,644.77
Collections in Switzerland		921,549.96	1,941,617.06
Sale of postage stamps	16,566.45	100,009.30	183,871.94
Reimbursement of cost of messages and cable charges			
Sundry receipts and reimburse- ments	2,038.85	8,494.25	19,034.05
Contribution of Relief Departments Grant from IRCC	50,000.—		
	296,666.55	2,131,803.10	3,842,798.78
Carried over from previous period		179,960.55	1,170,615.57
	296,666.55	2,311,763.65	5,013,414.35
EXPENDITURE :			
General expenses at Geneva (see Schedule 4)	88,542.35	1,003,703.18	2,408,345.37
Missions and delegations	18,686.65	120,339.—	533,772.97
Paid into Reserve Accounts		17,105.90	
Grants to Fund and Sundry Expenses	9,477.—		275.10
	116,706.—	1,141,148.08	2,942,393.44
Credit carried forward	179,960.55	1,170,615.57	2,071,020.91
Deficit carried forward			
	296,666.55	2,311,763.65	5,013,414.35

Schedule 3

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 TO DECEMBER 31, 1946

ACCOUNT

1942 Sw. Fr.	1943 Sw. Fr.	1944 Sw. Fr.	1945 Sw. Fr.	1946 Sw. Fr.
4,664,553.20	2,972,239.94	3,037,473.65	2,062,590.99	590,557.74
454,989.64	994,467.79	1,073,765.61	2,325,150.81	3,403,693.54
372,769.58	757,249.83	1,026,037.19	486,982.27	534,485.90
1,997,778.60	2,546,966.80	3,103,081.80	2,078,602.50	1,879,616.81
298,842.16	317,423.15	382,634.07	113,436.37	32,660.25
	2,093,574.16	1,934,368.55	1,697,567.45	669,007.91
615,622.78	1,029,263.60	503,399.81	580,474.06	
		1,619,183.65	2,461,081.91	1,091,198.62
8,404,564.96	10,711,185.27	12,679,944.33	11,805,886.36	8,201,220.77
2,071,020.91	6,042,216.18	8,058,849.73	5,959,075.34	207,118.20
10,475,585.87	16,753,401.45	20,738,794.06	17,764,961.70	8,408,338.97
3,593,963.02	6,480,056.13	8,496,749.64	9,950,077.51	6,817,902.93
839,406.67	2,214,495.59	4,957,969.08	7,057,765.99	4,618,577.76
		1,265,000.—	550,000.—	
		60,000.—		50,000.—
4,433,369.69	8,694,551.72	14,779,718.72	17,557,843.50	11,486,480.69
6,042,216.18	8,058,849.73	5,959,075.34	207,118.20	3,078,141.72
10,475,585.87	16,753,401.45	20,738,794.06	17,764,961.70	8,408,338.97

GENERAL EXPENSES

WAR WORK

GENERAL EXPENSES	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.
Salaries	27,777.15	519,207.20	1,404,207.12
Discharge allowances	—	—	—
Outside teams	—	9,067.05	13,402.11
Postage, messages, telephone, telegrams, wireless	19,099.20	161,719.22	329,321.56
Photostats	—	97,999.80	157,481.09
Publicity, propaganda, exhibitions cinema films, lectures, entertainment etc.	—	4,081.95	72,189.47
Office furniture and sundry printing	16,318.40	112,041.31	248,393.30
Rents, lighting, heating and office maintenance	—	4,464.95	1,325.—
Furniture, stationery, typewriters office installations and equipment	22,949.45	46,262.50	100,751.05
Maintenance of motor vehicles, fuel oil, tyres, repairs, etc. . . .	—	—	—
Sundry expenses, insurance, Swiss Mobilization Fund, sundry relief supplies, travel, passports, etc.	2,398.15	48,859.20	81,274.67
(See Schedule 3) TOTALS	88,542.35	1,003,703.18	2,408,345.37

INCURRED AT GENEVA

ACCOUNT

1942 Sw. Fr.	1943 Sw. Fr.	1944 Sw. Fr.	1945 Sw. Fr.	1946 Sw. Fr.
2,295,053.88	4,129,689.30	5,703,469.65	7,343,230.10	5,080,035.55
—	—	—	34,915.60	331,573.20
10,542.27	33,635.23	52,590.48	77,960.57	291,317.22
430,433.23	1,213,680.65	1,171,863.46	705,053.62	215,176.81
86,445.10	155,945.41	346,526.53	297,541.78	46,923.80
185,786.40	141,602.38	192,732.29	374,046.34	80,990.75
267,382.98	259,809.79	456,433.87	413,628.51	193,417.89
4,857.85	126,938.87	123,078.80	132,795.71	105,738.19
201,992.08	263,782.75	407,189.24	272,302.39	80,862.61
—	—	—	171,463.32	210,006.56
111,469.23	154,971.75	42,865.32	127,139.57	181,860.35
3,593,963.02	6,480,056.13	8,496,749.64	9,950,077.51	6,817,902.93

GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO ICRC

WAR WORK

	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.
Government of: Australia . . .	—	—	—
Bavaria . . .	—	—	—
Belgium . . .	—	—	—
Belgian Congo .	—	—	—
Canada	—	—	19,000.—
France	—	172,000.—	386,000.—
Germany . . .	—	94,500.—	320,515.—
Great Britain .	—	70,800.—	191,962.95
Greece (London)	—	—	—
India	—	—	—
Japan	—	—	—
New Zealand .	—	—	8,625.—
Poland	—	11,033.36	5,200.—
Rumania . . .	—	—	—
Slovakia . . .	—	—	—
South Africa . .	—	—	—
Switzerland . .	200,000.—	—	—
Yugoslavia . .	—	—	15,000.—
Town of Freiburg-in-Breisgau .	—	—	—
TOTALS (See Schedule 3)	200,000.—	348,333.36	946,302.95

* Grant for 1946/47 of the Canadian Government, credited for the year 1947 (= \$40 000.).

FROM 1939 TO END OF 1946

ACCOUNT

1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Total
Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.	Sw. Fr.
8,250.50	—	—	206,341.90	69,152.50	283,744.90
—	—	—	—	1,500.—	1,500.—
50,000.—	—	200,000.—	—	150,310.55	400,310.55
—	—	—	18,640.25	—	18,640.25
38,240.—	—	269,068.—	—	{ 155,340.—	481,648.—
—	—	—	—	{ 170,782.50*	170,782.50*
800,000.—	1,400,000.—	400,000.—	800,000.—	—	3,958,000.—
308,000.—	429,500.—	667,574.—	262,500.—	—	2,082,589.—
391,008.70	746,831.25	777,105.—	717,075.—	179,268.75	3,074,051.65
—	86,000.—	86,250.—	—	—	172,250.—
—	25,799.85	—	—	—	25,799.85
—	252,000.—	587,685.—	—	—	839,685.—
—	17,250.—	43,125.—	43,175.—	29,875.—	142,050.—
—	—	—	—	—	16,233.36
—	—	6,666.65	—	2,110.94	8,777.59
—	14,858.84	—	14,858.84	—	29,717.68
51,810.—	—	—	—	—	51,810.—
3,000,000.—	—	—	—	—	3,200,000.—
17,244.—	—	—	—	—	32,244.—
—	—	—	—	3,000.—	3,000.—
4,664,553.20	2,972,239.94	3,037,473.65	2,062,590.99	590,557.75 + 170,782.50*	14,822,051.83 170,782.50*
General Total.					14,992,834.33

(See Schedule 7)

GRANTS FROM NATIONAL RED CROSS, RED CRESCENT AND RED
WAR WORK

	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of			
Afghanistan	—	—	—
America	—	56,872.50	109,839.40
Argentina	5,721.16	2,243.95	—
Australia	—	—	22,753.45
Belgium	—	—	—
Bulgaria	—	—	—
Canada	—	—	14,530.66
Ceylon (B.R.C.)	—	—	—
Chile	—	—	1,227.—
Egypt	—	—	1,668.20
Eire	—	—	—
Germany	—	—	—
Great Britain	—	—	107,140.—
Guatemala	—	—	—
Haiti	—	—	—
Hungary	—	—	—
India	—	—	8,446.—
Italy	—	—	108,000.—
Netherlands	—	—	—
Netherlands East Indies . .	—	—	25,000.—
New Zealand	—	—	—
Norway	—	—	—
Mexico	—	—	—
Paraguay	—	—	—
Poland (London)	—	—	—
San Salvador	—	—	2,410.80
Slovakia	—	—	—
South Africa	—	4,387.50	4,312.50
Switzerland	—	200,000.—	—
(See Schedule 3) TOTALS	5,721.16	263,503.95	465,328.01

* Grant of the Canadian Red Cross for 1946/47, credited for 1947 (Canadian \$150,000.—).

Schedule 6

LION AND SUN SOCIETIES TO ICRC FROM 1939 TO END OF 1946
ACCOUNT

1942 Sw. Fr.	1943 Sw. Fr.	1944 Sw. Fr.	1945 Sw. Fr.	1946 Sw. Fr.	Total Sw. Fr.
—	—	—	35,354.16	—	35,354.16
115,606.90	383,985.55	351,700.—	1,513,085.—	2,639,671.19	5,230,760.54
580.20	—	—	—	—	8,545.31
—	137,398.—	—	344,529.—	346,800.—	851,480.45
1,384.—	—	—	—	—	1,384.—
2,608.24	—	—	—	—	2,608.24
—	77,294.69	115,942.03	116,504.85	{ 125,055.51 640,478.20*	449,327.74 640,478.20*
—	—	—	—	578.20	578.20
—	—	—	1,081.90	2,004.30	4,313.20
—	—	—	—	—	1,668.20
8,637.50	—	8,637.50	—	—	17,275.—
—	—	—	—	900.—	900.—
62,220.—	62,220.—	406,057.20	62,220.—	31,151.—	731,008.20
—	—	—	189.05	—	189.05
—	—	—	—	6,000.—	6,000.—
—	—	1,200.—	—	—	1,200.—
—	34,600.—	69,213.80	—	—	112,259.80
240,000.—	140,000.—	—	20,000.—	—	508,000.—
—	—	—	46,710.—	10,000.—	56,710.—
—	—	30,000.—	—	—	55,000.—
—	11,767.75	17,356.80	53,052.85	39,127.65	121,305.05
—	29,853.35	—	—	—	29,853.35
—	3,843.85	—	—	—	3,843.85
—	211.10	—	—	—	211.10
—	—	—	17,300.—	—	17,300.—
—	—	—	—	—	2,410.80
—	15,000.—	14,858.85	—	—	29,858.85
23,952.80	98,293.50	58,799.43	115,124.—	202,405.69	507,275.42
—	—	—	—	—	200,000.—
454,989.64	994,467.79	1,073,765.61	2,325,150.81	3,403,693.54 + 640,478.20*	8,986,620.51 640,478.20*
Total					9,627,098.71

(See Schedule 7)

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES (GOVERNMENTS)

Countries	1938 Sw. Fr.	1939 Sw. Fr.	1940 Sw. Fr.	1941 Sw. Fr.	1942 Sw. Fr.
Afghanistan	—	—	—	—	—
Albania	350.—	336.—	—	—	—
Argentina	—	5,721.16	2,243.95	—	580.20
Australia	—	—	—	22,735.45	8,250.50
Belgian Congo	—	—	—	—	—
Belgium	—	2,947.—	—	—	52,768.15
Brazil	1,186.97	—	—	—	—
Bulgaria	—	1,098.90	1,000.—	1,564.94	2,608.24
Canada	873.—	1,105.—	4,934.86	33,530.66	67,179.20
Chile	—	1,800.—	—	2,098.50	—
Costa Rica	108.75	—	—	—	—
Cuba	330.—	—	223.—	214.—	—
Czechoslovakia	—	1,058.95	—	—	—
Danzig	150.—	150.—	—	—	—
Denmark	1,450.68	1,850.14	1,690.75	1,665.—	1,801.48
Dominican Republic	871.—	—	434.78	—	—
Egypt	547.05	—	894.80	1,668.20	—
Eire	—	—	—	3,455.—	8,637.50
Ecuador	100.—	—	100.—	200.—	100.—
Estonia	—	224.85	—	—	—
Finland	1,431.30	1,367.37	1,318.10	1,295.34	1,275.—
France	2,422.—	2,346.—	172,000.—	386,000.—	800,000.—
Germany	13,105.50	4,005.—	98,426.25	324,385.—	311,870.—
Great Britain	4,399.50	3,643.50	70,800.—	299,102. 95	453,228.70
Greece	472.44	475.43	433.50	—	—
Guatemala	84.30	69.85	52.35	186.75	189.45
Haiti	—	—	—	—	—
Hungary	—	400.—	—	—	200.—
Iceland	—	—	—	—	—
India	1,620.—	1,525.—	—	11,006.—	1,260.—
Iran	—	696.93	700.—	—	—
Italy	4,281.75	—	4,338.60	112,290.05	240,000.—
Japan	10,000.—	10,000.—	10,000.—	10,000.—	20,000.—
Latvia	500.—	1,329.—	—	—	—
Lithuania	800.—	—	—	—	—
Mexico	—	—	—	1,072.50	—
Netherlands	2,403.50	2,403.27	2,371.35	243.35	1,147.90
Netherlands East Indies	—	—	—	26,137.—	—
New Zealand	—	—	—	8,625.—	—
Norway	2,326.50	1,492.54	1,475.01	1,474.50	2,949.05
Paraguay	—	—	—	—	—
Peru	227.80	—	80.—	—	—
Poland	1,647.20	1,666.50	13,735.86	5,200.—	1,392.—
Rumania	153.15	766.30	608.90	—	—
Salvador	—	—	1,016.—	2,410.80	—
Siam	1,536.35	—	1,272.—	1,236.—	—
Slovakia	—	—	—	—	—
South Africa	211.90	204.60	4,561.50	4,312.50	75,762.80
Sweden	2,229.—	2,127.—	2,120.—	2,049.50	2,052.—
Switzerland	800.—	200,800.—	201,000.—	1,000.—	3,001,000.—
Turkey	10,476.—	10,264.20	9,757.95	—	9,771.—
United States of America	21,740.—	22,300.—	70,237.50	182,739.40	115,606.90
U.S.S.R.	7,218.60	—	8,916.56	3,525.—	3,525.—
Yugoslavia	2,000.—	2,000.—	2,500.—	15,000.—	17,244.—
TOTALS	98,054.24	286,174.49	698,243.57	1,466,441.39	5,200,399.07

AND RED CROSS SOCIETIES) FROM 1938 to 1946

1943 Sw. Fr.	1944 Sw. Fr.	1945 Sw. Fr.	1946 Sw. Fr.	Total Sw. Fr.	%
—	—	35,354.16	—	35,354.16	
1,062.92	694.45	—	—	2,443.31	
—	—	—	—	8,545.31	
137,398.—	—	550,870.90	415,952.50	1,135,225.35	4.16
—	—	18,640.25	—	18,640.25	
2,800.—	203,000.—	—	153,295.55	414,810.70	1.52
1,793.75	—	4,159.82	1,913.50	9,054.04	
4,694.82	—	5,000.—	—	15,966.90	
77,294.69	385,010.03	116,504.85	1,091,656.21	1,778,088.50	6.52
623.10	520.80	2,134.74	2,504.30	9,681.44	
—	—	—	—	108.75	
—	—	—	—	767.—	
—	—	—	—	1,058.95	
—	—	—	—	300.—	
1,801.48	1,801.48	1,801.48	1,789.07	15,651.56	
—	—	—	2,190.—	2,595.78	
—	—	—	—	3,110.05	
—	8,637.50	—	8,637.50	29,367.50	
—	—	—	42.50	542.50	
—	—	—	—	224.85	
1,275.—	1,275.—	1,275.—	3,000.—	13,512.11	
1,400,000.—	400,000.—	800,000.—	—	3,962,768.—	14.54
434,660.—	667,574.—	272,820.—	5,400.—	2,132,245.75	7.82
809,051.25	1,183,162.20	779,295.—	2,200,497.95	5,803,181.05	21.30
86,000.—	86,250.—	—	6,502.50	180,133.87	0.66
—	187.65	189.05	193.50	1,152.90	
—	—	—	6,000.—	6,000.—	
1,006.65	1,200.—	—	—	2,806.65	
—	1,000.—	—	—	1,000.—	
61,659.85	70,473.80	1,260.—	1,241.10	150,045.75	0.55
—	—	—	600.—	1,996.93	
146,200.—	—	20,000.—	—	527,110.40	1.93
261,975.—	597,685.—	—	—	919,660.—	3.38
—	—	—	—	1,829.—	
—	—	—	—	800.—	
3,843.85	—	—	1,720.—	6,636.35	
—	—	49,005.80	10,000.—	67,575.17	
—	30,000.—	—	—	56,137.—	
29,017.75	60,481.80	96,227.85	69,002.65	263,355.05	0.96
29,853.35	2,949.05	2,949.05	5,166.67	50,635.72	
211.10	—	—	—	211.10	
200.—	—	2,150.—	4,232.30	6,890.10	
1,400.—	1,400.—	17,300.—	—	43,741.56	
—	7,339.75	—	2,110.94	10,979.04	
—	—	—	390.—	3,816.80	
—	794.06	—	—	4,838.41	
29,858.84	14,858.85	14,858.84	—	59,576.53	
98,293.50	58,799.43	115,124.—	202,405.69	559,675.92	2.05
2,052.—	2,050.—	2,049.—	4,100.—	20,828.50	
1,000.—	1,000.—	1,000.—	1,000.—	3,408,600.—*	12.51
9,780.—	9,780.—	9,770.20	9,780.—	79,379.35	
396,855.55	364,600.—	1,538,772.10	2,639,671.10	5,352,522.64	19.65
—	3,516.20	—	—	26,701.36	
—	—	—	—	38,744.—	

4,031,662.45 4,166,041.05 4,458,512.09 6,850,095.62 27,246,623.97 97.55 + 2.45 = 100%

Grants by National Societies, Ordinary Account 2,626,690.93 (Schedule 2)

Grants by National Societies, War Work Account 9,627,098.71 (Schedule 6)

Grants by Governments, War Work Account 14,992,834.33 (Schedule 5)

Total as above 27,246,623.97

* Not including the receipts of collections made in Switzerland from 1940 to 1946 and amounting to Sw. Fr. 14,469,222.53. (See Schedule 2, Annual Receipts of ICRC.)

V. Activities of the General Utility Services

Most of the Committee's departments gave direct assistance to the victims of the war, and their activities are manifest throughout this Report, without there being usually need to mention them. But in addition, certain important departments known as General Utility Services are different in their purpose, and it is appropriate that their work should be briefly mentioned here.

(A). REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

The creation of an *International Bulletin of Red Cross Societies* was suggested at the International Red Cross Conference of 1867, and examined by the ICRC in a memorandum dated June 20, 1868. It was finally decided upon at the Berlin Conference in 1869. The Fourth International Red Cross Conference, which met in 1887, confirmed this decision, and recommended that the Societies concerned should co-operate as actively as possible in the publication of this quarterly.

After the war of 1914-1918, the ICRC decided to publish the *Bulletin* monthly as part of a *Revue*, which would include articles on the implementation of the Geneva Convention, on problems of welfare, and studies on Red Cross questions and on the wider aspects of humanitarian work.

Today, the *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge* (published in French) is in its twenty-ninth year and the *Bulletin international des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge* in its seventy-ninth year.

During the second World War, the ICRC attempted to give in its pages a picture of its manifold activities, in so far as these

were of a kind that could be openly discussed, without doing harm to the cause of the persons who required help. The Committee endeavoured to make of their official publication, which was issued to government authorities, the Diplomatic Corps, the Red Cross Societies throughout the world, national and international welfare agencies and numerous subscribers, a means of information, the value of which was enhanced by the fact that the war hindered, or even stopped the free interchange of news.

Thus, the *Revue internationale* gave regular publicity to the appeals and memorandums which the ICRC issued to Governments and Red Cross Societies ; it published juridical articles on the application of the Geneva Conventions ; studies relating to the basic principles of the Red Cross ; information concerning the delegations established by the ICRC in all parts of the world and the visits of these delegations to PW and civilian internee camps ; information on the work done by the Central PW Agency ; on wide-scale relief schemes, and so on. A particular section was devoted to the rules and regulations concerning PW, civilian internees and enemy aliens, to the protection given by the emblem of the Red Cross, and to lists of books and articles on this subject. A special chapter dealt with air-raid precautions for civilian populations ; short summaries, reviews of books and magazine articles completed this documentation.

The *Bulletin*, which constitutes the second part of the *Revue*, was available to all the Red Cross Societies who desired to publish communications ; its chief purpose was to stress the activities of the members of the Red Cross community, by publishing their statutes, the composition of their central Committees, and so forth.

During the War, the circulation of the *Revue* was much hampered, but efforts were made to overcome these obstacles. It should be noted that the despatch of the Committee's official organ to certain countries, and in particular to the PW representatives in the camps in Germany, raised sometimes insuperable opposition on the part of the censors. In future, the Committee will claim the right of free circulation for its mail, publications and *Revue*. Its cause, which is also that of the Red Cross, calls for the widest publicity of its views and the facts

which can inform the public with all due clearness as to the true nature of its mission.

After the end of the war, and in reply to an appeal made by UNESCO, the Committee presented entire collections of the *Revue* to the libraries and universities of devastated towns in Belgium, Germany and France.

The Committee intends to pursue the publication of its monthly organ and to bring it up to date. It is now studying the question of an English edition ; this is primarily a financial problem, which it is difficult, but not impossible to solve.

National Red Cross Societies can give invaluable help to the *Revue* and especially to the *Bulletin*, by supplying data on their activities. The Committee requests these Societies to continue their help in this connection. It would greet, in the course of the next few years, a wider exchange of information, which is useful in developing the spirit of human solidarity on which their common activities are founded.

(B). PUBLICATIONS

From 1939 to 1947, the Committee issued a large number of books and pamphlets dealing both with its work as a whole, and with single aspects. It also published studies, lectures and talks given by its members or its staff.

The following is a list of the principal publications ¹ during this period :

How the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded and what it is doing. — Geneva, December 1941, 8vo, illustrated, 18 pp. (In French, English, Spanish and German. Out of print.)

The Work of the International Red Cross Committee and of the Central Agency for Prisoners of War from the outbreak of War,

¹ These include only publications edited by the Committee itself and not the very numerous articles on its work which appeared in various quarters.

- September 1st, 1939, until December 31st, 1941.* — Geneva 1942, 12mo, 38 pp. (In French, English and German.)
- Relief for Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees.* — Geneva, 4to, 24 pp. (In French, English and German.)
- The Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross.* — Geneva, 1944, 4to, 67 p., illustr. (In French, English and German.)
- The International Committee of the Red Cross. Intellectual Relief.* — Geneva, 1944, 4to, 28 pp. (In French English and German.)
- Documents sur l'activité du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge en faveur des civils détenus dans les camps de concentration.* — Genève, 1945, 8vo, 156 pp. (In French only.)
- Documentation relative à l'assistance aux invalides de guerre.* — Genève 1946, 8vo, III pp. (In French only.)
- Report of the "Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports" on its operations since inception in April 1942 up to 31st December 1946 delivered to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, in March 1947.* — Geneva, April 1947, 8vo, 29 pp. (In French and English.)
- Inter Arma Caritas. The Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross during the Second World War.* — Geneva 1947, 8vo, 135 pp., illustr. (Popular account of the war work of the ICRC. In French—two printings—, English, Spanish, German and Russian).
- Max HUBER, President of the ICRC. — *Au service du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge.* — Geneva, 1943, 12 pp. (In French and German.)
- Ed. CHAPUISAT, member of the ICRC. — *Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et la guerre.* — Geneva, 1940, 8vo, 15 pp. (In French, three printings, 1940-1943.)
- R.M. FRICK-CRAMER, member of the ICRC. — *The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Conventions relative to Prisoners of War and Civilians.* — Geneva, 1945, 8vo, 29 pp. (In French and English.)

Jean S. PICTET, Director-delegate of the ICRC. — *Le droit international et l'action du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge en temps de guerre.* — Geneva, 1943, 8vo, 34 pp. (In French only ; two printings.)

Jean-G. LOSSIER, Assistant Head of Department. — *De la question des messages familiaux à celle de la protection des civils.* — Geneva 1943, 8vo, 26 pp. (In French only.)

R. M. FRICK-CRAMER, member of the ICRC. — *Au service des familles dispersées.* — Geneva, 1944, 8vo, 11 pp. (In French and German.)

Max HUBER, Acting and Hon. President of the ICRC. *Principles, Tasks and Problems of the Red Cross in International Law.* — Geneva, 1946, 8vo, 42 pp. (In French, English and German.)

Carl J. BURCKHARDT, President of the ICRC. *Das Kriegswerk des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz.* — 1945, 8vo, 23 pp. (In German only.)

Marguerite VAN BERCHEM, Head of Section. — *Les Sections auxiliaires du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge.* — Geneva, 1947, 4to, 33 pp. (In French only.)

Max HUBER, Hon. President of the ICRC. *Principles and Foundations of the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1939-1946).* — Geneva, 1947, 8vo. 41 pp. (In French, English and German. This paper will be found at the head of the present Report.)

Georges DUNAND, Director-delegate of the ICRC. — *The International Committee of the Red Cross in Latin America.* — Geneva, 1947. 8vo, 38 pp. (In French, English, Spanish and Portuguese.)

Mention should also be made of the Minutes of Conferences of delegates of Red Cross Societies, and of Government Experts (dealing chiefly with the revision of the Conventions), reports on the financial situation of the ICRC, the yearly audit of accounts, and chapters of this Report, of which advance publication has been made.

(C). INFORMATION

The extent of the work brought by the War and the constant development of the Committee's organization led to the setting up of a Press and Information Department. This was on a small scale in the first years of the war, but became an independent Division in 1943. In the interest of its work, the Committee had to establish contacts throughout the world, and to get in touch with ever wider circles: prisoners' next of kin, civil populations, agencies who donated relief supplies, etc. Thus arose the need for internal and external information.

1. Internal Information

The Information Division, with the help of the Committee's delegates throughout the world, gathered from the international press all particulars which could be of use to its work. Newspaper cuttings—some 4,000 a month—were classified in a folder, which was issued, sometimes daily, to all the Committee's departments.

A wireless monitoring service, equipped with recording apparatus, listened in and transcribed the information given by radio. This means of information was extremely valuable when Switzerland was entirely surrounded by the Axis Powers.

Two roneographed bulletins, for internal use, one dealing with the work of the Agency, the other with that of the delegations, sent out a steady stream of information and directives to the outside sections in Switzerland and to the delegations abroad.

Periodical talks to the personnel of the various Sections (some of which were highly specialized) gave these an opportunity to become acquainted with the general lines of the Committee's work.

2. External Information

It must be confessed that the Committee did not, perhaps, attach enough importance to external information, considering

the extent of its task. Chiefly concerned with alleviating countless forms of suffering, to the best of its ability, the ICRC devoted its main energies to projects which brought direct and immediate relief. The Committee was, further, reluctant to spend too much of its always insufficient means, on work which was not obviously concerned with the relief of human distress. The members and staff of the ICRC, who were wholly absorbed in their task and constantly faced with new, urgent and complex problems, had difficulty in finding time themselves to describe these tasks. In many cases where the Committee's interventions with the belligerents were not founded on any Convention, its policy was to observe discretion ; any publicity given to its humanitarian efforts might have imperilled their success, and diminished the chances of achieving similar results in the future.

Despite a reduced budget and the lack of any systematic publicity scheme, the Information Division did its best to tell the world about the needs of the victims of war, and its own manifold activities in their behalf.

Releases — This work of information was carried out, first and foremost, through the press. The Division proceeded to publish release information in several languages, which was handed to the national and foreign agencies in Switzerland. From September 1, 1939, to June 30, 1947, these releases numbered 347.

Bulletin. — As from 1943 up to 1946, an information bulletin, published in several languages, was also issued monthly to the press.

Press. — On important occasions, press conferences were held, especially in Switzerland. Their purpose was to supply full particulars to the correspondents of Swiss and foreign newspapers on the main features of the work done, and to give them an opportunity for putting questions and discussing problems which were a concern to public opinion.

Publicity. — The Division also wrote newspaper articles and paragraphs on the chief activities of the ICRC. Their art department included some 15,000 photographs, besides those

taken by the Committee's delegates in the camps. The Division also replied to applications from Red Cross Societies, newspaper writers and the public. Several posters and propaganda tracts were published in connection with public subscriptions in Switzerland.

Wireless. — Through the support and generous help of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, in particular of its Geneva office, many wireless talks about the work of the ICRC were given on medium wavelengths by the station at Sottens, and on short wavelengths by the station at Schwarzenburg. Hundreds of reports, interviews and news items were thus broadcast throughout the world, repeated in six languages. Radio plays for the general public were given on several occasions.

Cinema. — After the press and radio, we turn to the cinema. The Committee endeavoured to make the meaning of its work and of the Red Cross known through films which would make direct appeal to the public. Four reels, with sound tracks in several languages, were edited during the war, and were most successful. "The Flag of Humanity" and "One door is still open", which were news-reels, showed the departments of the ICRC at work. "The Missing Soldier" and "Prisoners of War", written in imaginative form, related the lives of PW, with the help of settings which were as true to life as possible.

Exhibitions. — Lastly, several permanent and travelling exhibitions were arranged in Switzerland and showed the public what was the real situation of the victims of the war, and the work of the ICRC. In Geneva itself, a permanent exhibition was displayed in the building of the Agency, which was seen by thousands of visitors of every kind. The ICRC also took part in exhibitions planned by National Red Cross Societies or by other associations.

Lectures, etc. — To these large-scale publicity methods should be added public lectures given in Switzerland or abroad by members of the ICRC or of the staff about the work done in Geneva. Visits to the headquarters of the ICRC and its departments were arranged for persons passing through Geneva, who

could thus gain some idea of the scope and complexity of the work.

With few means at its disposal, the ICRC thus contributed usefully towards making more widely known the principles which are the foundation of the Red Cross, and bringing home the rules of humanity and mutual assistance which they represent. The war being now concluded, the Committee will pursue its work in this field and endeavour to inform the peoples with a spirit of peace and solidarity, pledges of a better future.

(D). TRANSLATIONS

At the outbreak of the war, the volume of correspondence sent to the ICRC in languages other than French¹ increased rapidly.

The ICRC thereupon applied itself to writing part of its communications in the other languages most widely used, to make its replies clear and less liable to misinterpretation.

During the first two years of the war, the Committee had no expert staff for this work : each department did, to the best of its ability, its own translation work. Faced by work on an ever increasing scale, the Committee engaged the services of two full-time translators in 1942. In April 1943, an expert Translation Section had to be opened.

This Section had to deal mainly with :

(a) recruiting the necessary staff, both permanent and temporary ;

(b) enabling the ICRC to answer correspondents in their own languages, especially civil or military authorities, national Red Cross Societies, welfare agencies and so forth ;

(c) translating into French all documents written in a language unfamiliar to the department that had to deal with it ;

(d) drafting in the languages required, all documents sent out by the Committee (letters and notes, informations, circulars,

¹ According to the bye-laws of the International Red Cross Conference, the official language of the Conference is French. Moreover, the great majority of the members and staff of the ICRC are French-speaking.

reports, publications, press articles ; legal, historical and diplomatic texts, etc. used by the Committee in its own work, and books giving publicity to the work of the ICRC or to Red Cross principles in general) ;

(e) supplying interpreters in talks with foreign visitors, at international conferences, and so forth.

The Translation Section soon comprised twelve members, who were able to carry on the work in the seventeen following languages :

Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Esperanto, German, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish, Swedish.

As regards translations into Albanian, Arabic, Greek and Hindustani, the Section had recourse to outside help. The most widely used languages were English, German and Spanish.

From the time it was opened until June 1947, the Section translated into the above languages 36,874 pages. This figure gives, however, a very incomplete picture of the mass of the work accomplished. It is perhaps of interest to mention here some of the difficulties encountered.

In the first place, a well thought out and well drafted text is always easier to translate than one which is not. To the former category we must reckon the mail received by the Committee from official bureaux, Red Cross Societies, and so on. On the other hand, the translation of letters sent by PW and next of kin, many of whom had had only elementary education and were unaccustomed to express themselves in writing, involved a considerable amount of labour. In such instances, the translator had also to be an interpreter, and as a preliminary, discover the probable meaning of these communications. The translation of texts in languages which are little known in Europe also offered particular difficulties. Such was the case of the voluminous mail from Indian PW in Germany, which was almost always written in unfamiliar dialects. These were turned over to an ICRC delegate who had lived in India. Letters in Arabic and Turkish raised no great difficulty, as the Section

enlisted the services of Egyptian and Turkish students resident in Geneva.

It was, however, in the field of "technical" translations, on subjects such as law, medicine or biology, that the Section encountered the greatest difficulties, due to the particular knowledge required.

The types of documents to be translated were varied in the extreme. Amongst the documents issued by the Committee, mention should be made of the numerous reports on camp visits which the delegates of the ICRC sent to Geneva in German or English, and which had to be translated into English or French, for communication to the Detaining Power and Power of origin. After the war, the voluminous documents relating to the international Conferences held in Geneva in 1946 and 1947, (the Preliminary Conference of national Red Cross Societies and the Conference of Government Experts for the study of the Conventions) was likewise issued in an English version ; so were the various Reports on these two important sessions. The Translation Section made out in English, Spanish, German and Russian the translation of the book "Inter Arma Caritas" and at present it is undertaking, with the help of outside staff, the English and Spanish versions of the present Report and the documentation which will be submitted to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

(E). RECORDS

The Registry of the ICRC, a most essential working implement, developed in proportion to the Committee's activities, which were themselves subject to events. The Registry was therefore organized not in accordance with any logical or uniform scheme, but in a practical manner, which enabled rapid and accurate research.

The Registry (or Archives) is subdivided into two sections : (a) Permanent Records ; (b) War-work Records, relating to the recent War. To these must be added the Photographic Department and the Library.

1. Permanent Records

These records contain, in files classified according to subject matter, all the documents relating to the development, history and activities of the Red Cross on national and international lines. They include, for instance, the papers dealing with the constitution and recognition of the national Red Cross Societies, and with the revision of the Conventions.

This service has charge of the archives of the ICRC relating to the international or civil wars which preceded the recent war, such as the War of 1870, the first World War of 1914-1918, the war in Abyssinia, 1935-1936, the Civil War in Spain, 1936-1938, and so on.

2. War-Work Records

These records are subdivided into several departments :

(a) *Correspondence.* — This includes all the incoming or outgoing mail of the Committee's general departments and is classified according to the different criteria : subject matter, correspondents and date.

The total number of files in these records was 2,742 at the end of June 1947. Placed one above another, they would form a column some three hundred and thirty feet in height.

To allow research in these files, a single card-index according to subject and to name, including over 70,000 cards, was established after the dictionary-catalogue system. Three other card-indexes relating to : (1) the Protecting Powers, (2) international events and (3) the activities of the Committee's chief delegations, facilitated the work of the staff of the Records Division.

(b) *Camp strengths.* — This department centralized information reaching the ICRC on camp strengths and the nationality of PW and other detainees. The particulars received were transcribed to cards of different colours, each corresponding to the status of the detainees (PW, civilian internees, political deportees, civilian workers, displaced persons, and so forth),

on the basis of one card each per class of detainees in the same camp.

Amongst the various sources from which these data were derived were, first and foremost, the reports by the Committee's delegates on their camp visits.

(c) *Indexing of Delegates' Reports.* — The delegates' reports on their camp visits—independently of the information which was turned over to Camp Strengths—were a most valuable source of information on the manner in which the 1929 PW Convention was applied in the camps. To this end, they underwent a second indexing which led to all important facts concerning the treatment of PW being transcribed to cards of different colours, according to the main chapters of the Convention. This indexing operation enabled the ICRC to check the implementing of the Convention and to undertake the negotiations required in the interests of both PW and civilian internees. It also gave the ICRC the necessary basis for its studies in view of the revision of the Conventions.

When these operations were finished, the reports were catalogued and bound at the rate of 5 to 10 reports per volume on an average. As on June 30, 1947, the number of these volumes was 1,335.

3. Photographic Department

In addition to written evidence, the records also filed several thousand photographs, mostly taken by the delegates and illustrating the work of the Committee in all its fields. These photographs are filed according to subject matter and countries. A card index supplies a complete catalogue of this collection, and enables all the photographs relating to a given subject to be found at once.

4. Library

Besides the chief publications of national Red Cross Societies, the library of the ICRC contains a number of works relative to the history and activities of the Red Cross. This library is, of

course, available to the national Societies and to any person who is interested in the work of the Red Cross.

When the work of the ICRC was at its peak, the staff of the Records Division numbered twenty.

(F). COMMUNICATIONS

To carry out its duties, the ICRC must have means of communicating with the various belligerent countries. Moreover, Art. 36 of the 1929 PW Convention stipulates that letters and cards from PW "shall be sent by post by the shortest route". The breaking of communications between the two groups of belligerents, aggravated by the Allied blockade and the Axis counter-blockade, was so complete that the work of the ICRC in behalf of war victims ran the risk of being seriously imperilled, or even entirely stopped. The problem to be solved was more diplomatic than technical: this was to establish, through direct negotiation, special lines of communication between the belligerents. A department, the Transport and Communications Division was opened by the ICRC, to study the questions raised daily by the state of communications throughout the world, and to find a new route whenever one was closed. The task of this Division grew considerably as time went on; during the last months of the war, it allowed the relief of the ICRC to be carried on, and avoided the complete breakdown of the PW mail service.

The work of the ICRC in conveying relief by sea, rail and road is dealt with in Vol. III. We shall therefore confine the following remarks to the difficulties encountered in postal communications.

The encirclement of Switzerland by the Axis Powers after the Franco-German armistice deprived the Committee of direct communications with the Allied Powers. In consequence, the ICRC proposed to the belligerents in June 1940, several solutions. These included the use of aircraft and ships sailing under a particular status, and a wireless station reserved for the Committee's requirements. Unfortunately, the belligerents were

unable to come to an agreement on the subject. The ICRC could therefore do no more than to apply to the competent authorities in the various States, each time it received complaints about the defective working of the mail service. The Committee itself could only transport mail for PW and internees when this was the sole means of preventing complete suspension of postal connections. The belligerents were anxious that action by the Committee should not relieve the enemy of his responsibility in this respect. It was for this reason that, despite the great uncertainty of communications in the Balkans, the ICRC was not authorized to open a shipping route in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The improvements secured by the ICRC in the transmission of mail, by recommending new technical methods, better routes of communication, or more rapid censoring, did not succeed in amending a situation which deteriorated as time went on. On June 20, 1944, the ICRC therefore addressed a memorandum to the belligerent States party to the PW Convention, recalling their obligations under Art. 36 to 41, which govern the relations of PW with the exterior. The Committee also alluded to the fact that the organization and functioning of postal services were wholly outside its province. Consequently, the ICRC requested these States to take all measures likely to speed up the postal service for PW and civilian internees. The Committee further recalled that it already served as intermediary in forwarding large numbers of civilian messages (25-word family messages), and that it was carrying on a steady correspondence about civilians with the various national Red Cross Societies and welfare agencies. This correspondence was subject to the same delay as PW and internee mail, and the ICRC asked the Governments concerned to take measures to hasten its transmission.

Two months later, the situation became still worse, as the result of the Allied landing in France. Until then, PW and internee mail, and civilian messages to and from Germany and the occupied countries, had been forwarded via Spain and Turkey. When events made it impossible to follow these routes, the ICRC had the mail from Germany handed to it, and

then organized between Geneva and Marseilles a regular road transport service which ran for almost a year. The delegation in Marseilles was responsible for the forwarding of this mail overseas, the other delegations serving as relay stations, whenever necessary. Thus, the mail bags were usually handed over to the post offices only on arrival at the country of destination. We may quote as an instance of a particularly complicated route the mail service between Geneva and Belgrade, which passed successively through the delegations at Marseilles, Rome, Algiers, Cairo, Ankara and Sofia.

The mail for France and Belgium was carried by road from Geneva to Lyons, where it was handed over to the French post office.

A mail service for PW and civilian internees between Great Britain and Germany had been organized by the British Legation in Berne, in agreement with the ICRC and the Swiss Post Office. The mail was carried by road from Geneva to an air-field in liberated France, and then taken by air to Great Britain.

The best solution, however, was that adopted for transmission of PW and internee mail to and from the United States. By agreement between the United States and Swiss Governments, the mail was carried, as from December 1944, by American aircraft which landed at Geneva on an average twice a week.

In addition to these regular services, the ICRC often had to resort to exceptional means of transport such as couriers, road caravans, block-trains, etc.

It will be recalled that the mail for PW, internees, the Central PW Agency and the ICRC (as far as PW and internees are concerned) are exempt from all postal charges. But civilian messages, and the correspondence of the ICRC not relating to PW or internees, do not benefit by free postage. As a rule, these two kinds of correspondence followed the same routes, but were conveyed quite separately. Sometimes, however, the ICRC had to find routes for mail subject to postal charges, different from those already utilized for PW and internee mail.

From September 1944, communications between Central Europe and the remaining world were possible only through

the ICRC, at any rate as regards PW and internee mail and 25-word civilian messages. The end of the war in May 1945 brought no improvement ; on the contrary, all communications with Germany were cut over a period of five months. When they were resumed in September 1945, 1,200 bags of mail for Germany had accumulated in Switzerland, and the ICRC organized for this purpose a regular road service which delivered the letters in each of the occupation zones. These deliveries were carried out six times monthly until April 1946, when postal connections were partially restored.

On several occasions the ICRC took steps, but without success, to secure permission to carry mail by means of aircraft flying under special safeguards, but the chief scheme submitted to the Governments concerned, in July 1943, was to institute a regular air-line between Geneva and Lisbon, under the sponsorship of the ICRC. Shortly afterwards, Germany agreed to convey Red Cross mail free of charge by the German air line which linked up Stuttgart and Lisbon, and the opening of a special line was no longer required ¹.

As a general rule, the extreme slowness in postal relations compelled the ICRC to take persistent action with all the means at its disposal. It suggested new methods of correspondence, such as express messages, which were used on a large scale, and wireless messages, which unfortunately never got beyond the initial stage. It asked for improvements in the censorship system, and had free postage extended to all victims of the war, whether military or civilian. At its request, the Swiss Wireless Company instituted direct wireless connections with Cairo and Algiers to cover its requirements. To reopen contacts with delegations cut off from Geneva, the ICRC had recourse to the telephone and telegraph services of various States, to special couriers, and also to the diplomatic bag of several countries.

¹ As regards communications with the Far East, which raised equal difficulties, see the chapter on the Conflicts in the Far-East.

(G). MAIL SECTION

1. Registering of Mail

Before war broke out, one person sufficed to register all the correspondence received in Geneva. Registration consisted, and still consists in giving a number to each item received, and to list it in a " Mail Sheet " for the information of heads of departments, to add a brief *précis* opposite each number, and to indicate on the document the name of the person who has to handle it. From September 1939, the growing bulk of mail involved several changes.

The checking of incoming mail passed gradually from the Mail Registration to the Sorting Service opened in 1939. The latter sent it direct to the sections started to meet the growth of the Committee's work. Thus, the Divisions for Relief, Information, Transport and Communications, and Accountancy were led to set up their own registration and " mail sheet ". From then on, the Registration Service proper dealt only with the mail received by the general departments of the ICRC. Moreover, from 1943, besides allocating the incoming items to the responsible staff members, it made copies for all departments concerned. The Mail Sheet henceforth was completed by the following indications : filing symbols (under which copies are filed), the departments who had received copies, and so forth.

In 1945, the staff numbered 12. At the end of 1946, reduction in the bulk of the mail and the closing down of certain departments allowed the Registration Section once more to take over the checking of mail for the Relief and Information Division.

2. Telegraph Service

From August 1940, a separate telegraph service became necessary ; it was managed by an expert. In 1941 and the following years, the work of this service grew steadily until the staff numbered eight assistants. The reader will more easily understand these requirements when he is told that from

September 1, 1939, to September 30, 1947, the telegrams received in Geneva numbered 348,636, and those sent out 219,513. Over this same period, the total cable charges debited to the ICRC was about six million Swiss francs, of which over half had to be met by the Committee itself.

The incoming telegrams included many requests for news, and many lists of PW and internees¹. The telegrams sent from Geneva gave the answers to these requests for news and forwarded the lists received. Telegraphic transmission of lists of PW and internees was in current use between the ICRC and the overseas countries.

The wireless also allowed the ICRC to maintain regular connections with the belligerent States and with its delegations in Europe and elsewhere.

When a telegram referred to several questions, it was divided up by the Telegraphic Section, which sent to each department or staff member copies of the passages which concerned them.

An achievement in this field was the introduction of wireless messages for PW and internees in the Far-East and their next of kin. The steps taken by the ICRC with Governments and Red Cross Societies led to an arrangement whereby PW and internees could send to their relatives and receive in reply a wireless message containing ten words of news at most. Receipt and forwarding were ensured in both directions by the ICRC. The despatch of these messages began early in January 1945 ; when this service was closed in August of the same year, about 57,000 messages had been forwarded.

(H). LIAISON

This Section was opened in August 1941, and always occupied two members of the staff. Their work was to act as liaison officers between the general departments of the ICRC and its

¹ A list received by radio from the United States soon after the entrance of that country into the war contained the names of all the German, Italian and Japanese civilians recently interned ; this cable included 267 pages and showed over 13,000 names.

specialized divisions, such as the Central PW Agency, the Relief Division, etc. In a complex and highly subdivided organization like the ICRC, it was indispensable to coordinate the work and avoid both gaps and duplication.

The Liaison Section distributed throughout the offices concerned copies of the Committee's incoming or outgoing mail, and all documents. Since it was informed of the work of each Division, it played the part of an internal information bureau.

The Section also made up very full card indexes, supplying all necessary particulars on Red Cross Societies, Governments, diplomatic representatives, official information bureaux and the many agencies with which the ICRC is in contact.

(I). MANAGEMENT

1. Staff

On September 1, 1939, the staff of the ICRC in Switzerland numbered about fifty; on December 31, 1944, they were close on 3,500. Such an increase will convey an idea of the magnitude of the problems to be solved by the ICRC in recruiting staff. Up till the end of 1943, the staff were mostly volunteers (1617 voluntary, against 1391 paid workers); but as time went on, the proportion was reversed. As explained above, the ICRC very soon felt the need for recruiting a fairly large number of particularly qualified staff members on a regular basis and for a certain period; it had consequently to begin by offering them an allowance, and then a regular salary. The salaries offered by ICRC remained, however, very low and never exceeded on an average 500 Swiss francs a month. Such a low figure does not seem to have hindered recruitment, for the ICRC always had a fairly large number of applicants on its books; on the other hand, the smallness of the salaries led to many resignations, which involved new appointments. Offers of voluntary service were always very numerous, and in areas of Switzerland outside

Geneva proved most valuable in setting up departments, called "Auxiliary Sections" in many places¹.

Few organizations have been faced with the same need of finding workers with such varied qualifications. To fill responsible posts (Central Directorate, Secretariat, Directors of Divisions and their immediate assistants), the ICRC had by degrees to enlist the services of lawyers, doctors, authors, journalists, expert translators and interpreters, records officers, librarians, and so on.

As regards the Central PW Agency, the chief qualification of the staff was the ability to make out, classify and handle the millions of cards which were the basis of the Agency's work. The utilization of the Hollerith Business Machines led to the appointment of a staff who thoroughly understood their running.

The Relief Division and the Transport Division each had a personnel composed of experts in international trade, customs, railway and maritime questions, assisted by a staff who had business training. To these two Divisions were attached the convoying agents, who had to accompany the ships chartered by the ICRC carrying relief supplies (56 agents for 43 ships), and towards the end of the war, the fleets of vehicles which the ICRC had to organize to convey food supplies to the PW camps, when railway communications in Central Europe had been paralysed by air bombardments. This last department required the engagement of hundreds of fresh personnel, such as fleet leaders, garage directors, drivers, mechanics, and so on.

The Accountant's Department, which the extent and complexity of the Committee's daily financial operations made most important, recruited its staff from amongst qualified accountants and bank clerks. Mention should also be made of employees who did various technical and administrative jobs, which although on a lower grade, were indispensable to the smooth working of the organization.

The ICRC further undertook to secure for its staff the privileges granted under social legislation, to compensate as far as possible for the low scale of salaries.

¹ For fuller particulars, see Vol. II.

Holidays with pay (up to three weeks) were allowed and sick leave with pay (up to six weeks a year). In addition, a winter bonus, on a sliding scale, was paid each year to all the staff, to help them to meet the extra expenses due to the cold season. In 1943, this was completed by a family allowance.

In the field of insurance, the ICRC voluntarily paid half the unemployment insurance premium to which all paid staff are liable under Swiss law. Further, it contracted for a collective accident policy during and out of working hours, for all the staff who wished to avail themselves of it. The ICRC also made available to its personnel, by 1942, the services of one, and later of several staff nurses. Their duties included first aid in cases of accident or sudden indisposition during working hours, answer to applications for advice or assistance, visiting and nursing sick members of staff confined to the house. From 1942 until Dec. 31, 1946, the staff nurses who carried out their duties with unremitting care, were called upon for over 40,000 cases.

In addition to this welfare service, the ICRC in September 1945 started a legal assistance service, to give aid and advice to the staff who had legal or private difficulties.

In its anxiety to have closer and more understanding relations with the staff, the ICRC founded in February 1944, an "Advisory and Liaison Committee". From 1944 to 1946, this included 18 members, twelve of whom were elected by the staff, three by the heads of departments and three were appointed by the ICRC. Reductions in staff in 1947 reduced these figures by one third. The duty of this body was to lay before the ICRC any recommendations or grievances of the staff. It carried out its difficult task to general satisfaction; in most cases its suggestions in favour of the staff were approved by the ICRC.

One fact, however, greatly hampered the recruitment of staff throughout the war: the ICRC could obviously give its assistants no assurance as to the duration of their appointment. This fact, added to that of a low scale of salaries, led to the resignation of many qualified workers. At the beginning of the war, employees could be dismissed at 24 hours' notice; later, this previous notice was extended to two months. The personnel

had reason to fear that their dismissal might occur at a time when the economic situation made it difficult to find new positions. When the close of the war led to a reduction of the work, and consequently of the staff the ICRC, on the proposal of the Advisory and Liaison Committee, decided to give all members of the staff who were dismissed an allowance proportionate to their years of service and to the amount of their salary, the maximum compensation being 1,000 Swiss francs.

2. Premises

The ICRC never had any serious difficulty in finding the necessary premises in which to carry out its work. This was due to the understanding and good will of the authorities of the Canton and City of Geneva, who made an invaluable contribution to the work of the ICRC by offering the free use of the main premises which the Committee required, as circumstances demanded, namely the "Palais du Conseil Général", the Rath Museum, the former Hotel Beau-Séjour, the former Hotel Métropole and the former Hotel Carlton, where the ICRC has at present its headquarters.

The first Sections of the Agency were installed in the autumn of 1939 in the "Palais du Conseil Général", which they very soon filled to capacity. They were soon joined by the ICRC and its Secretariat, who had until then remained at the Villa Moynier, the headquarters of the Committee since 1933. In view of the immensity of the work, the "Palais du Conseil Général", despite its dimensions (some 3,000 square metres) became in turn too small, and the ICRC, to relieve congestion in its departments, also took possession of the Rath Museum and had to rent about thirty flats successively in various parts of the town.

Even this was, however, still insufficient, and new premises had to be found. Various departments were installed in the former building of the Swiss Banking Corporation, which this establishment offered free of charge; the former Hotel Beau Séjour became the headquarters of the Relief Division, and the Exhibition Buildings, a large hall of 10,000 square metres,

housed the dumps of relief parcels for PW. The ICRC itself and its Secretariat, whose staff had also greatly increased, were lodged in the former Hotel Metropole, situated in the heart of the city of Geneva.

The steadily increasing bulk of relief supplies of all kinds for PW which passed through Switzerland compelled the ICRC to find new warehouses, in particular at the Cornavin Station, and the bonded warehouse in Geneva, the Renfile warehouse (in the Canton of Geneva), in the towns of Vallorbe, Bienne, etc. ¹.

When the work of the ICRC reached its peak, the surface of the premises occupied by the Committee was over 33,000 square metres.

The close of the war and the reduction in its wartime activities enabled the Committee to regroup many departments and to give up most of the buildings and premises previously occupied. The reconditioning of the Hotel Métropole as an hotel led the ICRC to move its headquarters to the former Hotel Carlton, situated near the United Nations, where it is at present settled with its general departments.

3. Office Supplies

This department had to find the necessary furniture and office machines required (about 1,500 typewriters and 50 accounting machines), and to ensure the regular issue of stationery in the various premises occupied by the ICRC. From January 1, 1941, the date when regular statistics were first made out, to June 30, 1947, the Office Supplies Department issued over 26 million sheets of typing paper, over seven million envelopes, over 42 million cards and over 44 million forms of all kinds.

At the outbreak of the war, the Department received invaluable help from the Secretariats of the great international organizations—League of Nations and International Labour Office—whose work was reduced as a result of the war, and who kindly lent large quantities of furniture and numerous type-

¹ See Vol. III.

writers, which were in use until 1946. These loans, which dispensed with renting or purchasing equipment, enabled the ICRC to effect a considerable saving.

4. Maintenance

As the departments of the ICRC were thus dispersed throughout the whole town of Geneva, a messenger service had to ensure liaison between the various premises and buildings; this included a number of cyclists and a small motor-truck. Within the buildings themselves, documents were carried by floor messengers.

The many removals of departments from one building to another which had to be done as quickly as possible, to ensure the least possible delay, required the services of a permanent expert staff of workmen, carpenters, labourers, electricians, and so on.

The various premises and buildings occupied had of course to be cleaned and repaired. The above staff, with the help of a team of about thirty cleaners, attended to this.

(J). TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS

When the war broke out, one person did the roneograph work for the ICRC, with one machine. Subsequently, eleven more assistants had to be engaged (this was the figure in 1946), with four electric copying machines (three purchased and one hired). This department was sometimes helped by extra staff.

The Roneo Department had to reproduce all documents sent out in large numbers (reports on camp visits; documents for conferences; four periodical publications, etc.) From 1942 to June 30, 1947, this department typed 63,693 stencils and roneographed 6,027,036 pages.

In April 1943, the ICRC purchased a mimeographing machine, which enabled all the usual printing to be done and with which not only the cards used by the Hollerith machines were printed,

but also a large number of forms and cards used by the Central PW Agency.

The number of typewriters was so large (1500 at the beginning of 1945) that a repair department of eleven mechanics had to be set up. These employees made 40 to 50 complete overhauls of typewriters on an average per month in a special workshop, and a large number of daily repairs which were done in the offices.

A Photostat Department was also opened, the greater part of whose work was for the Central PW Agency¹. The general departments often applied to this service for blocks for printing purposes, or photostats of documents which had to be kept in the records at Geneva.

The ICRC also employed two, and sometimes three draughtsmen who made out the most varied notices, labels and file-titles, statistical graphs, reproductions of maps, panels for ICRC exhibitions, and the plans of many premises occupied by the various departments.

For reasons of economy, the ICRC also opened a binding-shop, where three employees were occupied in binding the numerous documents turned out by the Roneo Department, and also in repairing books, dictionaries and atlases, which had become damaged through hard usage.

¹ See Vol. II.

VI. Relations of the International Committee with the National Red Cross Societies and with the League of Red Cross Societies

(A). RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

1. Cooperation and Liaison

The ICRC, as the institution which in 1863 gave the first impulse to the world wide service of the Red Cross, based on Central Committees which had to be set up in all countries, naturally endeavours to remain, in time of peace as in time of war, in close contact with the National Red Cross Societies, and to act in complete understanding with them.

The tasks imposed by the war on these Societies, as on the Committee, involved an extension of their relationship. Thus there grew up between the Committee and the Red Cross Societies during the World War a multiplicity of far-reaching ties of many kinds, and this was undoubtedly to the greatest advantage of the common task of the Red Cross in protecting the victims of war.

Since it is impossible to give a complete account here of the relations of the ICRC with the National Societies, or of all matters involving their co-operation, we must confine ourselves to quoting some examples only, whilst referring the reader for further material to the other chapters of the present Report.

At the very beginning of hostilities, the ICRC communicated to the National Societies the text of the letter of notification which it had addressed on September 4, 1939, to the Governments of the belligerent States. In this letter it placed its ser-

vices at their disposal, offering to do its part on the humanitarian plane in relieving the distress caused by the war, according to its customary role and to the extent of its powers.

In this Note it defined the tasks it intended to undertake in the war, especially those of ensuring the application of the Geneva Conventions relating to the treatment and exchange of medical personnel, and the organizing of a general scheme of relief for prisoners, both civilian and military, for the able-bodied as for the sick and wounded.

When informing them of this Note, the ICRC begged the Red Cross Societies to recommend to their respective Governments the applications it had made to them, asking them to facilitate its humanitarian undertaking. It also offered its services to the Red Cross Societies in organizing the despatch and distribution of relief in money or in kind to their countrymen who might be held prisoner in belligerent countries and would need help.

In its circular letter No. 360 to the Central Committees of National Red Cross Societies, dated September 18, 1939, the ICRC, after referring to the varied branches of its work, laid stress on the importance it attached to the co-operation amongst themselves of all National Societies. This was to ensure—within the framework of their national duties—the exchange of news concerning the victims of war and all activities forming part of the programme of welfare laid down by the International Red Cross Conferences. The ICRC declared itself ready to play its customary role of neutral intermediary for this object.

The Committee addressed another circular letter to the National Societies in November 1939. This letter explained the serious difficulties encountered daily in securing the agreed facilities and exemption from charges in respect of postal, customs and transport services for letters and parcels addressed to PW, civilian internees, military internees in neutral countries, and sick and wounded combatants.

In drawing the attention of National Societies to the importance and urgency of these problems, the Committee invited them to seek, together with their Governments, the solutions best calculated to promote the humanitarian work of the Red Cross in this field.

One of the chief tasks of the *National Societies of the belligerent countries* was to forward relief supplies to their country-men, whether PW or civilian internees, who were in enemy hands. In these tasks the ICRC played a very important part as intermediary ; this is described in detail in the section of the present Report concerned with Relief Work. Here we need only mention that the ICRC set on foot a vast organization with this aim, which made possible the transport and distribution of relief to PW alone, amounting in value to 3,500,000,000 Swiss francs. Further, the Committee ensured each year the forwarding to the camps of Christmas parcels supplied by the American, British, Canadian, French and German Red Cross Societies for the benefit of their nationals. The Committee also acted as go-between in promoting or permitting the despatch of medical supplies and relief sent by some of the Red Cross Societies and intended for fellow Societies. It also addressed appeals to National Societies on behalf of those who sought its mediation. As an example, we may point out that on May 29, 1940, it transmitted by telegraph to seventeen National Societies an appeal for help from the French Red Cross in behalf of the millions of refugees and evacuees in France who were then in a state of grave destitution.

The ICRC, moreover, kept the Red Cross Societies informed upon all details of PW mail, upon its efforts to remedy the delays to which this was subject, upon the quickest routes, and on the part which it could play as a postal relay station. The Committee answered the questions of the Red Cross Societies and made the necessary enquiries through its delegates ; it gave the Societies an account of the situation of their prisoner nationals, in so far as verified by its delegates, and of their needs in food, clothing, medicaments, etc.

The co-operation of the ICRC with the National Societies proved to be especially effective in the matter of civilian messages. This method of correspondence, due to the initiative of the Committee, and carried out with approval of Governments, made it possible for messages to cross the barriers thrown up by the war. These communications, limited to 25 words and to messages relating to family affairs, were written on forms

devised by the ICRC ; the system was adopted by almost all National Red Cross Societies throughout the world. It was solely by this means that civilians separated by the war were able to correspond during the entire period.

The British and German Cross Societies were the first to adopt the system of family messages, and to undertake, at the Committee's request, distribution in their own countries. In 1940, the Red Cross Societies of New Zealand, Rhodesia and South Africa also printed their own forms. From then onwards, the National Societies of the most distant States produced their own headed forms for civilian messages and adopted this method of correspondence in their own countries. By the end of 1943, ninety-eight National Societies and branches of the Red Cross had civilian message forms printed in their own names. These agencies centralized the forms filled in with particulars and sent them to Geneva, where they were sorted, classified and checked, then dispatched under general cover to other National Societies, who had charge of the distribution to the addressees in their country, of whatever nationality or condition they might be.

The ICRC requested the Societies to return to Geneva the messages which they had been unable to deliver to the addressees, and to undertake individual enquiries about these persons. The Societies, for the most part, agreed and set about this often difficult research. They sent all obtainable information to the ICRC, and in the case of a death, its cause, the date and place of burial, as well as news relating to the family of the deceased person.

In certain cases, the Committee itself had to undertake such work on the spot, in particular when the addressees belonged to a minority persecuted for reasons of race, language or opinion, whom the Societies were prevented from helping. Nevertheless, it was thanks to the support and co-operation given by the National Societies to this enterprise that the system of civilian messages was able to develop and spread to the extent it did.

The Red Cross Societies also gave their help to the " Dispersed Families Service ", set up at the beginning of 1944 in Geneva. This service of the Central Agency, as may be seen in greater

detail in the relevant chapter, invited all persons scattered in various parts of the world, who had been unable to renew the links with their relatives, to send word to Geneva, giving the name of the next of kin with whom they wished to get in touch once more. For this purpose, identity cards were printed in different languages. A great number of Red Cross Societies and local branches were supplied with these cards and undertook to have them made public and filled in by those concerned, and to return them to Geneva.

Some National Societies were instructed by their Governments to set up official Bureaux of Information for PW, as provided for in Art. 77 of the Convention. The ICRC and the Central Agency in particular co-operated closely with these offices for the forwarding of lists and all particulars relating to the PW. The Committee did everything in its power to remain in close contact with these Societies, despite the obstacles to communications created by the war. Resort was commonly had to telegrams, as well as of the most modern means of communication, such as microfilms.

Before the close of hostilities, the ICRC concentrated attention on the aid to be given to the war-disabled, and sent information on this subject to the National Societies, asking them to study this important matter jointly with their Governments, and to fill in a questionnaire. The replies formed the subject of various later publications.

The ICRC also kept up the practice of regular correspondence with the *National Societies of the neutral countries*, especially with regard to the collection, organization and distribution of relief supplies, the despatch of ambulances and medical stores, and internment in neutral countries.

On September 8, 1939, the American Red Cross requested the ICRC to offer the services of the ARC to the National Societies of the belligerent countries. The Committee transmitted this offer, and made known to the ARC the particular requests made by each Society. Other forms of co-operation of this kind followed in due course.

In response to an invitation of the ICRC and the League, the delegates of several National Societies of non-belligerent

countries met for a private conference in Geneva on April 16, 1940. The debates turned on the effect of the war on the programme of work of their Societies, on the help they might give to victims of the war, and how to secure the best results; the means included methods of collecting relief in money or in kind, co-operation with other relief organizations, the purchase, despatch and conveyance of relief supplies, and their co-ordination.

We must call attention here to the close and useful understanding between the ICRC and the Swedish Red Cross for the organization of relief work in Greece. This undertaking was suggested in the first instance by the Turkish Red Crescent; a detailed account of it will be found elsewhere in the present Report. In 1943, the ICRC gave its support to the representations made by the Swedish Red Cross to the belligerent States concerned, to increase the rate of repatriation of seriously wounded or sick PW.

In August 1944, the ICRC pointed out to the National Societies of the neutral countries the value of planning the equipment of medical missions, which would be capable, if called upon, of going into the neighbouring belligerent countries and giving emergency aid to the National Societies.

Despite the many unforeseen and growing tasks brought by the conflict, the ICRC endeavoured to keep the National Societies informed of its work, as far as the circumstances of the war allowed. This included the regular publication in the "Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge" and its supplement, the "Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge", of news relating to its own activities as well as those of the National Societies. The Committee also sent out to the Red Cross Societies circular letters and memoranda to make clear to them its policy or standpoint concerning problems of general interest, or relating to any action carried out by the Committee in its capacity as agent of the International Red Cross Conferences.

After the close of hostilities, the Committee turned its attention towards giving National Societies the opportunity for a preliminary exchange of views on Red Cross problems in general, and on the main features of the work they had carried out in the course of an unprecedented conflict. The ICRC proposed that the

National Societies should send representatives to Geneva to take part in a meeting to be held in 1946, pending the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, which would demand intensive preparation. The National Societies replied in favour of the Committee's proposal, and the Preliminary Conference took place in Geneva from July 26 to August 3, 1946. This meeting brought together numerous representatives, belonging to almost all the Societies throughout the world, and amongst them sixteen Presidents.

2. Representation of National Societies at Geneva

The co-operation of the ICRC with the *National Red Cross Societies* was made far easier by the presence in Geneva of their *accredited representatives*.

The Committee is at all times anxious to keep up close and uninterrupted relations with the Red Cross Societies, in the spirit of Art. 13 of its statutes authorizing the acceptance of delegates accredited to it by the Central Committees. The ICRC was therefore extremely glad to benefit by the presence of these representatives, with whom it maintained close relations that were at once confident and cordial. If the ICRC seemed to hesitate at the outset as to the timeliness of these delegations and to fear too great an increase in their numbers (certain misunderstandings did in fact arise on this score), it was soon convinced of their usefulness.

The ICRC asked National Societies to preserve the non-official character of these delegations, in view of the existence of several Red Cross associations, which could not be officially recognized but with which the Committee had to maintain *de facto* relations. It seemed preferable not to create a kind of *corps diplomatique*, little in keeping with the character of the Red Cross, and within which representatives of opposing sides would have been confronted. This policy, which met with no objection from the National Societies, did not lessen in any way the efficacy and cordiality of ICRC relations with the Red Cross representatives. In full agreement with the National Societies concerned, the

ICRC had moreover always reserved the right of corresponding direct with them, should it seem necessary.

The accredited delegates of the National Societies could not be invested with diplomatic privileges or immunity, since the ICRC is essentially a private organization, in spite of the special position it occupies under international law. The advantages which some of them were able to enjoy derived not from their capacity as Red Cross delegates, but from the fact of their belonging at the same time to diplomatic missions.

A resolution of the XVIth International Red Cross Conference enjoined upon National Societies not to set up any delegation on foreign territory without the consent of the National Society concerned. This resolution does not of course apply to the National Red Cross delegations to the ICRC, in so far as they act only in connection with the Committee. Certain delegations to the ICRC however, who sometimes called themselves "Delegation in Switzerland", extended their field of action to practical duties, which were certainly extremely useful, on Swiss territory, but outside the competence of the ICRC. The Committee made a point of laying down that, in these cases, such an extension of work of course depended on the approval of the Swiss Red Cross.

3. Missions of the ICRC to National Societies

The ICRC also maintained close relations with the Red Cross Societies through the medium of its *delegations abroad*.

In almost all countries of the world, on the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC had to send delegates or appoint them on the spot. It was in belligerent countries in particular that appointments were made, but also in many neutral countries. These representatives were without exception of Swiss nationality.

The part which they played, especially in supervising the implementing of the PW Convention and the distribution of relief, is dealt with in a separate chapter.

Apart from this role, which brought them in contact with Governments and General Staffs rather than with National Societies, the delegates of the ICRC did however remain in

close touch with the said Societies, from whom they received most valuable support. By informing the Committee and the National Societies about their respective tasks, by examining many problems in common, the delegates contributed greatly to strengthening the links between Geneva and the Red Cross Societies, especially in times when correspondence was hampered and routes of communication were blocked.

Certain National Societies of the occupied countries made urgent requests, asking for the despatch of ICRC delegates. The Committee made every effort to comply, but often met with opposition from the occupying Power and did not always succeed in overcoming these objections, although representations were repeatedly made.

It should be mentioned that many of the National Societies sent *special missions* to Geneva to deal with numerous problems in person. The Committee was fully aware of the value of these meetings, which permitted delicate questions, otherwise requiring long correspondence, to be solved without delay. Some National Societies being near at hand, gave their directors or the heads of their external relations section, the duty of visiting Geneva periodically. In the year 1942, Dr. T. W. Osborn, delegate of the South African Red Cross, who had come to visit the ICRC was, at the instance of the Committee, able to return to his country by crossing enemy territory, accompanied by a representative of the German Red Cross.

The ICRC, for its own part, sent out several special missions from Geneva, in order to establish direct personal contact with certain National Societies and to bring about a solution of important and urgent problems. These missions were not so numerous as the ICRC could have wished, because of travel difficulties, and the fact that both members and principal assistants were kept in Geneva by pressure of work. We mention however, amongst the most important missions :

(1) Mission of M. Carl J. Burckhardt and Mlle. Lucie Odier, members of ICRC, to London in 1940, to deal with a number of questions relating to PW and other victims of war, in consultation with the British Red Cross and the competent authorities.

(2) Mission of MM. J. Chenevière, F. Barbey, members of ICRC, and Dr. M. Junod, to Paris, in March 1940, to discuss with the French Government and the French Red Cross various problems, in particular the exchange of information about PW, notices of deaths, matters of inheritance and civilian messages.

(3) Mission of M. H. de Pourtalès to Italy in August 1940, chiefly to carry on negotiations, through the kind offices of the Italian Red Cross, with the Italian Government, to get authority for the ICRC delegates to visit the British and French PW and civilian internee camps.

(4) Mission of Mlle. Odier and M. Martin Bodmer, members of the ICRC, to Berlin, in autumn 1940, on the invitation of the German Red Cross.

(5) Mission of Mlle. Odier, member of the ICRC, and Dr. M. Junod, to Great Britain, in 1941 to discuss with the British Red Cross and the British Government methods of despatching parcels from Great Britain to British PW ;

(6) Mission of M. J. Chenevière, member of the ICRC, accompanied by M. C. Pilloud, to Rome, in May 1941, to settle with the Office for PW, organized by the Italian Red Cross, various questions concerning the exchange of news about PW and civilian internees.

(7) Mission of M. J. Chenevière, accompanied by M. G. Graz, to Vichy and Lyon in December 1941, to study with the French authorities and the French Red Cross various problems relating to military and civilian victims of the war and to the working of the Central PW Agency.

(8) Mission of M. Chapuisat, member of the ICRC, as delegate of the ICRC to the IVth Pan-American Red Cross Conference at Santiago de Chile (December 1940). The ICRC delegate passed through Washington, where he made contact with the American Red Cross. After the Conference, he went to the Argentine, then to Brazil, and twice to Canada, where he visited different branches of the National Red Cross Societies.

(9) Mission, in 1942, of M. J. Duchosal, Secretary-General, and M. Hans de Watteville, to Washington and South America. The delegates visited the Red Cross Societies of Mexico, Cuba, Peru, Chili, the Argentine, Brazil, Venezuela, Jamaica and Haiti, and had useful conversations with their Central Committees.

(10) Mission of Mles. S. Ferrière and L. Odier in the Near East and Africa, from February to May 1943, which enabled these two members of the ICRC, on a journey of 6875 miles, to make contact with civil and military authorities, as with the National Red Cross Societies, and to ensure a methodical and clearly defined liaison amongst the Delegations of the ICRC at Cairo, Beirut, Johannesburg, Capetown and Salisbury.

(11) Mission of MM. Rikli and Senn to Chungking, in 1943, in order to make contact with the Chinese Red Cross and study with it the various problems raised by joint activities of this Society and the ICRC.

(12) Mission of M. Chapuisat, member of ICRC, and M. D. de Traz, in 1943, to Budapest, Bucharest, Bratislava, Odessa, Sofia and Zagreb. They were officially received by the heads of State and members of Governments, as by the Central Committees of the Hungarian, Slovak, Rumanian, Bulgarian and Croat Red Cross Societies, and various national branches. The representatives visited the PW, civilian internee and refugee camps, and numerous institutions and hospitals in which these Societies had a particular interest.

(13) Mission of Dr. M. Junod and Mlle. Straehler to Manchukuo and Tokyo, travelling via Moscow, in 1945, to direct the ICRC delegation in Japan.

(14) Mission of M. F. Siordet, who left in 1946 for the Far East and Australia, with the aim of strengthening the ties between the Red Cross Societies of these regions and the ICRC.

(15) Mission of M. H. Cuchet, Director-Delegate and Treasurer of the ICRC, to Great Britain, the United States and Canada, in spring 1946, to inform the Red Cross Societies of these countries as to the financial position of the ICRC.

(16) Mission of M. G. Dunand, Director-Delegate of ICRC, to represent the Committee at the Vth Pan-American Red Cross Conference at Caracas, in February 1947. M. Dunand later visited the National Societies as well as the Governments of the twenty Republics of Latin America, to inform them of the work accomplished by the ICRC, and to seek support for the post-war tasks of moral and material relief.

4. Difficulties encountered

After the occupation of a considerable number of countries during the first phase of the war, great difficulties arose in the field of relations between the ICRC and the National Red Cross Societies. The Societies or the authorities of the occupying Powers demanded that all communications and dealings between the ICRC and the Red Cross Societies of the occupied countries should pass through their hands. This demand was the cause of great delays, and the Red Cross Societies of the occupied countries complained that the Red Cross of the occupying Power withheld communications from both sides and prevented the sending of their representatives to Geneva. The ICRC thereupon took vigorous and repeated action against this interference, in the first place by protesting to the Red Cross Societies of the occupying Powers, and then by deliberate opposition to the conditions set by them. After prolonged efforts, the Committee succeeded in sending temporary or permanent delegations into certain of the occupied countries. It remains none the less true that the demands of the Red Cross Societies of the occupying Powers during the war were extremely prejudicial to the relations of the ICRC with the Red Cross Societies of the occupied countries and reduced them to a very great degree.

As regards the relations of the ICRC with the Red Cross Societies set up outside their national territory, it was usually through the medium of the British Red Cross that the ICRC was able to correspond with them, their Committees having for the most part emigrated to London. The ICRC was moreover able to keep in direct contact with them, thanks to the presence of their delegates in Geneva and of an ICRC delegation in Great Britain.

If relations of the ICRC with the National Societies, in spite of these efforts, were in certain cases not as close and regular as might have been, this was because of the many practical and sometimes insurmountable obstacles produced by a war which had spread to all Continents. In order to avoid similar difficulties in the future, the Preliminary Conference (1946) adopted recommendations whereby the States should ensure free and regular intercourse amongst national and international Red Cross organizations, and also for the introduction into existing treaties and into new international Conventions of clauses providing facilities for such intercourse.

In isolated instances, especially at the beginning of the war, some of the National Societies were disturbed to find that, side by side with their own contacts with the Committee, the ICRC was in direct and regular touch with the Government of their own countries on questions of importance. However, they quickly came to appreciate the necessity for such a course, and all misunderstanding was cleared up without trouble. In time of war, the ICRC branches out beyond the field of action proper to the National Societies, into activities that fall specifically within the competence of Governments, and which derive from the application of the international Conventions, in particular those relating to the treatment of PW. Moreover, the Committee assumes towards the Governments treaty obligations relating to the operation of the Central PW Agency. Finally, the Governments have recourse to the ICRC as a neutral intermediary to negotiate proposals of a humanitarian character with the other side. In certain instances too, the ICRC or its delegations have taken steps, with the authority or tacit approval of Governments, for protection or relief in which it was not possible for the National Societies to participate.

The Committee has at all times considered that the successful carrying out of all its tasks, far from detracting from the prestige of the National Societies, has served the best interest of the Red Cross as a whole, and by aiding the expansion of the work, was thus also in the interests of the individual Societies.

The ICRC did as far as possible keep the National Societies informed of its relations with Governments ; it was very often

due to the effective support of the Societies that the Committee was able to set up such relations and to extend them.

In the case of complaint by some of the Societies of being insufficiently posted, the Committee had assumed that they were kept informed by their own Government of the action taken by the Committee at Geneva in direct collaboration with it, when this was the quickest and most efficient means. In order to avoid such misunderstandings in the future, the Preliminary Conference passed a recommendation that, when it seemed necessary and possible, the Committee should act in such cases in the first instance through the National Societies as intermediaries, and that in all circumstances it should inform the National Society of any given country direct of its work in that country, and of its relations or negotiations with the Government, or with any agency responsible to that Government. As this recommendation corresponded with its own views, the ICRC gladly supported it, with the exception however of any case in which the Government itself should raise objection.

It follows, then, that the bonds between the National Societies and the ICRC in time of war were far more numerous and had greater regularity than might appear at first sight. If they were sometimes variable and did not always cover the Committee's work as a whole, it was due to the exigencies of war and to the anxiety of belligerent Governments that some of their undertakings should remain confidential.

If the ICRC was not able to keep the National Societies continually informed of its work, this was because its own duties, ever increasing in scope and urgency, absorbed the whole of its time and labour. Finally, it must be agreed that the setting up of relations between the ICRC and the National Societies depended, to a great extent, on the co-operation which they were willing to pursue with Geneva. The experience of the ICRC with the National Societies during the war, and the positive and indispensable support received from them, only enhanced its anxiety to maintain the ties which united them and to strengthen these still further. Let us hope that this wish may be the more easily fulfilled by the return to normal conditions.

(B). CONSTITUTION AND RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

In confirmation of precedents set up since 1876, the IVth International Red Cross Conference, held at Karlsruhe in 1887, instructed the Committee to notify existing National Societies of the formation of new Societies, after having scrutinized the legal basis of their constitution. The mandate given to the ICRC to recognize National Societies was since then confirmed in 1928 by the Statutes of the International Red Cross. Towards 1889, the ICRC drafted a number of principles to which the new Societies had to subscribe to obtain recognition (e.g. they must belong to a country where the Geneva Convention is in force ; they must be recognized by their Government as an auxiliary of the Army medical service ; they must bear the name and display the emblem of the Red Cross ; they must admit to membership their own nationals without discrimination). These conditions have never been modified and the ICRC has at all times considered them valid. In view, however, of the complexity of the international legal status of various groups of States (e.g. commonwealths), the ICRC has interpreted them in a liberal spirit and taken into account the circumstances of each particular case. At the Preliminary Conference (1946), the Committee stated that, in its own view, these conditions might be revised and brought up to date. It declared itself ready to take part in a Joint Commission of National Societies and of the ICRC, which would have to redraft them.

The enquiries to be carried out by the Committee, by virtue of the mandate given, before considering the recognition of National Societies, do not as a rule present any difficulties in normal times of peace ; the recognition of a new Society in time of war, however, becomes an extremely delicate matter. War may in fact have far-reaching effects on the status of a Power. It may even lead to situations which are quite anomalous under international law, as for instance when certain States are recognized by the belligerents, and others refused recognition by other Powers. The ICRC is then faced by *de facto* situations

which are outside its competence and on which it cannot express any opinion, because of their political nature.

The upheavals caused by the second World War had a profound effect on the conditions in which several of the National Societies had to live and work. In some of the occupied countries, sections of the National Societies survived, sometimes subject to changes imposed on them by the occupying Power, whilst other sections went abroad and constituted themselves anew as National Societies, under the protection of a Government in exile, recognition being given by some States and withheld by others. In some instances, countries split up into several States, each of which set up an independent Red Cross Society. It even occurred that the same country had two Governments, one at war with the other, and two Red Cross Societies. Thus two, three, sometimes even four Societies would each claim to be alone entitled to the recognition granted by the ICRC before the war to a single National Society.

In face of this deadlock, the only course the ICRC could follow was, firstly, to postpone all recognition for the duration of the war and until normal international conditions returned, and secondly, for the sake of carrying out its humanitarian mission, to maintain all *de facto* relations with all Red Cross Societies, whether recognized or not ; it was indeed essential that this should be done, in the interests of the victims of war awaiting help.

The ICRC explained this policy in its circular letter No. 365 of September 17, 1941, to all National Red Cross Societies. In the same circular the Committee stated that they would publish in the " Bulletin international " all communications received from Red Cross Societies, whether recognized or not, in the same form in which they were received.

None of the Societies raised any objection, or made any reservations to the course proposed by the Committee.

The only exceptions the ICRC made to the principle of postponing new recognitions for the duration of the war were in favour of the Red Cross Societies of Eire and Liechtenstein, since their formation had come about independently of any situation connected with the state of war. The ICRC informed

the Central Committees of National Societies of its recognition of the Irish Red Cross in its circular letter No. 361 of November 2, 1939, and of that of Liechtenstein in its circular letter No. 369 of June 22, 1945.

Since the majority of the Red Cross Societies in exile had set up their quarters in London, it was through the British Red Cross as intermediary that the ICRC managed to correspond with them. The Committee was able to keep in direct contact with them, thanks to the presence of their delegates in Geneva, as well as through its Delegation in London as intermediary. The British Red Cross informed the ICRC of the setting up of Allied Red Cross Societies in London and defined its position in relation to them. The British Red Cross pointed out that it was necessary, for reasons of security, to forward certain communications by its channel, in particular, enquiries concerning the missing. Following on the organization in London of the "Postal Message Scheme", each Committee was given authority to organize a similar service of postal messages for its own nationals, and to set up a special office for the purpose. A packing centre had been established for parcels for Allied PW.

The ICRC was notified of the establishment in London of the following sections of Red Cross Societies: Norwegian Red Cross, May 20, 1940; Dutch Red Cross, May 29, 1940; Polish Red Cross, October 31, 1940; Czechoslovak Red Cross, November 14, 1940; Yugoslav Red Cross, July 10, 1941; French Red Cross, December 30, 1943; Luxemburg Red Cross, April 3, 1943.

As soon as hostilities came to an end, the ICRC considered that any National Red Cross Society which was once more domiciled in its own liberated and independent territory, and which was recognized by its own Government (also returned to its own soil), had full rights to the benefit of the recognition given to it before the war by the ICRC, whatever the date of its dissolution by the occupying Power. Thus it was unnecessary to give recognition anew, the only reservation being that the statutes of these Societies should, as before, conform to the conditions of recognition laid down by the ICRC after the Karlsruhe Conference.

Following on these considerations, the ICRC also held the opinion that only the National Red Cross Societies which had returned to their own country should henceforth qualify as such, whilst associations which had been set up outside their national territory became branches abroad, of which the existence and organization depended, firstly, on the National Society of their own country and secondly, on the approval of the Red Cross of the country in which they were established.

This principle, for most of the Societies, amounted to recognizing that the capitulation of the Axis forces did in fact constitute the "return to a normal international situation" which circular No. 365 had named as putting a term to the *de facto* relations established with all Red Cross associations. For those few Societies whose position was not affected by the capitulation, the application of this circular was deferred, as a temporary measure, until the signing of the Peace Treaties.

The Preliminary Conference (1946) gave full approval to the policy adopted by the ICRC, which involved the postponement during the War of all recognition of National Societies, that is, until the international situation had once more become normal. The Conference recognized that the Committee had rightly made exceptions in the case of the Red Cross of Eire and Liechtenstein. It also approved the attitude of the ICRC concerning the National Societies which had returned as soon as the war had ended to their own liberated and independent countries, and which were recognized by their own Governments, also re-established on their own soil. The Conference agreed that it was not necessary to give any new formal recognition to these Societies, with the sole reservation that their statutes should conform, as before, to the conditions for recognition laid down in 1889.

For reasons given above, the ICRC could not as a rule during the war offer any opposition to the changes imposed upon National Societies by the occupying Power. These were matters on which it could express no opinion, because of their political character. It was however able to intervene on the humanitarian plane, where measures taken by the occupying Power threatened to nullify the operations of a National Society; it was, for

instance, able to bring about the release of certain directors of the Red Cross. The endeavours of the ICRC and the League once more to set in motion the work of the Red Cross in Germany after the dissolution of the German State will be the subject of a separate report to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

Since the ending of hostilities throughout the world, the ICRC has resumed the exercise of its mandate covering the recognition of new Societies. It was thus very glad to welcome into the circle of the International Red Cross the Syrian Red Crescent (October 12, 1946), the Lebanese Red Cross (Jan. 31 1947) and the Philippine Red Cross (May 5, 1947).

The German Red Cross

The position of the Red Cross in Germany has been a matter of especial concern to the ICRC. On August 23, 1945, after the capitulation, the Committee sent a memorandum to the Foreign Ministers of France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, and to the International Control Commission in Berlin on "the organization and work of the Red Cross in Germany". Its point of view was expressed in substance as follows: All National Societies being dependent on a State which is party to the Convention of Geneva, the dissolution of the German Government makes the position of the German Red Cross uncertain in law. Whatever the political measures taken with regard to the German State, it is essential that, apart from all juridical considerations, suitable agencies, whether central, regional, or local, should be able to resume Red Cross activities in Germany. It also seems essential that all, or some at least, of the German Red Cross staff, equipment and property should not be dispersed.

The Inter-Allied Control Commission took cognizance of the memorandum on September 29, 1945 and informed the Committee that, whilst refusing for the time being to consider the reconstruction of a central organization of the German Red Cross, they would examine the question again within three months time. On January 15, 1946, the Control Commission

informed the ICRC that, since the screening of members of the German Red Cross was not yet concluded, discussion of the problem was adjourned *sine die*.

From that date, and for the purposes of this report, the measures taken to promote the re-organization of the Red Cross in Germany may be divided in three parts. The first is a summary of the action taken by the ICRC on its own account, the second, of that taken jointly by the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC, and the third, which appears in the League's General Report, shows what was accomplished on its own initiative.

Russian Zone. — The Soviet Authorities in common with the other three Powers occupying German territory, decided to dissolve all the organizations of the former Reich and, amongst them, the German Red Cross. This decision also applied, as from October 1945, to the Russian sector in Berlin. It was, however, chiefly in this sector that a constant co-operation was established, from the summer of 1945, between the Soviet representatives and delegates of the ICRC in the sphere of relief to the civil population, which was gradually extended to the Russian occupation zone itself.

French Zone. — Although in the French sector of Berlin a few local Red Cross organizations were able to remain in existence, in the French Zone proper, a complete dissolution was enforced. From November 1945, however, Welfare Committees (Hilfsausschüsse), the formation of which in each district and co-ordination with the various "Kreise", "Länder" and "Zone" were permitted by the French Authorities, were able to do useful work and to safeguard the existing property of the Red Cross. These Committees, which included representatives of several relief organizations, were in close touch with the occupying Powers, usually through the intermediary of delegates of the ICRC. The latter, with the support of visiting representatives of the ICRC from Geneva, succeeded in persuading the competent authorities of the need to re-organize the Red Cross in the French Zone. The official re-

establishment dates from April 16, 1947, on which day General Koenig issued an Order authorizing the formation of a Red Cross Society in each "Land", and the transfer of all property belonging to the former German Red Cross, which had been sequestrated or temporarily handed over to other organizations with similar aims, to the new Red Cross Societies.

British Zone. — Local organizations were able, from the beginning, to continue their relief work, although on a limited scale. As they had not been dissolved but had had to rid themselves of members implicated in the Nazi regime, they were able to carry out extensive and efficient work. Strongly supported by the Delegation of the ICRC in the British Zone, these Red Cross Societies, which played a part of increasing importance, were later helped by the League. In May 1946, the arrival of a League delegate at Vlotho marked the beginning of co-operation between the League and the ICRC.

In Berlin, the Red Cross services of the American, British and French Sectors combined for joint action, although they were not given recognition.

American Zone. — As in the British Zone, local branches were never dissolved. The military administration, which eliminated members it considered undesirable, very soon entrusted these branches with certain duties. The delegates of the ICRC, as in the British Zone, made every endeavour to promote contact between these societies and the occupying Authority, and above all gave moral support to these branches, which were extremely well organized to carry out the relief work allotted to them.

Co-operation between the League and the ICRC could serve a useful purpose only in the American and British Zones. In the Soviet Zone, the re-establishment of the German Red Cross had still made no progress by June 1947. In the French Zone, the representatives of the ICRC whose Delegation was about to be wound up, were able to introduce the League delegate to the occupying Powers, to the local German Authorities and to the Red Cross Societies, whose formation was a source of keen satisfaction to the delegates. In the Berlin sectors, where

Red Cross services were working without any formally recognized status, the League and delegates of the ICRC remained in touch, and this in itself was very useful.

In the British and American Zones, however, the delegates of both organizations worked in close conjunction from the spring of 1946 onwards. Whilst representatives of the ICRC continued the work begun immediately after the capitulation, the League delegate devoted most of his efforts towards a unification of the various Red Cross Societies. The task of the League delegate was relatively easy in the British Zone, where regional branches had as yet no fixed status : it was harder in the American Zone, where some Red Cross Societies had already adopted their own regulations. The delegate's aim was to persuade each Society to adopt uniform statutes, so that when the time came they could all be merged without difficulty in a single national organization. The delegates of the ICRC and the League still worked in their respective fields, but pooled their forces. The delegates of one shared with the other the advantages of the contacts they had made over a period of many months ; the delegates of the other co-ordinated the efforts which had been rather scattered. In combination, the delegates of the two bodies collaborated in the greatest possible degree, in order that even at a time so full of problems in Germany, the principle of universality of the Red Cross might persist.

(C). PROTESTS OF NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES AGAINST ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMANITARIAN CONVENTIONS

The Statutes of the International Red Cross, in Article VII, lay upon the ICRC the duty of receiving all complaints concerned with alleged infringement of the International Conventions.

In practice, these complaints fall within two quite distinct categories. The first, which is by far the wider, includes the protests from National Societies, prisoners of war, etc. concerning the failure to apply a given clause of the Conventions, especially in relation to the treatment of PW, and more often than not having reference to some permanent condition of affairs.

Such complaints, of which the ICRC received a great number, were the subject of constant exertions ; they were dealt with in a practical and tactful way, ranging from talks between delegates and camp commandants, to official notes, addressed in especially serious cases to the highest Government authorities. The Committee was usually able to achieve an improvement in unsatisfactory conditions brought to its notice, or, when it was a question of past events, to make certain that they should not recur.

The second type of complaint, comparatively limited in number, consists of protests, expressed in formal terms, against the violation of fundamental principles of international law or human rights. These usually relate to past events, about which the ICRC is not in a position to establish the evidence required. One of the essential features of the Red Cross is its impartiality ; its non-political status enjoins it to practise impartiality in the sense of complete equity.

On the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC was careful to state in its memorandum of September 12, 1939, sent to Governments of belligerent States and published in the " Revue " of that month, its fundamental duties and the conditions, according to the clauses of the Geneva Convention and the principles of the Red Cross, in which it might participate in enquiries into alleged violations of humanitarian rights protected by international law. The Committee explained at the outset that the functions which it might on occasions assume in this connection could only be exercised in such a way that they did not embarrass or make more difficult the practical tasks which are the consequence of its traditional duties.

If the ICRC, the memorandum recorded, agrees to intervene in order to verify a breach of a Convention, or of rules of international law for the protection of human rights, it does so in obedience to the following principles :

(1) The ICRC may not and cannot constitute itself a Commission of Enquiry or a tribunal, nor appoint its members as inspectors or as assessors.

(2) The ICRC confines itself to an attempt to find one or more persons who are qualified to carry out the enquiry, and, in a particular case, to give opinion on the points raised by the parties to the dispute.

(3) The ICRC can only undertake enquiry, or should the occasion arise, give an opinion on certain points, on the strength of a mandate already laid on it by a Convention, or by virtue of an *ad hoc* agreement. It may propose such an agreement of its own accord, or at the request of one of the parties. The procedure of the enquiry must provide all the guarantees of impartiality and ensure to the parties the means to defend their case.

(4) If the conditions set out above do not apply, whereas a representative of the ICRC has established facts that can be held to be a violation of the Conventions or of the principles of law, the ICRC shall be sole judge in the decision to withhold the report of its delegate, or on what conditions it will communicate it to the defendant for comment.

(5) If a belligerent party requests the ICRC to undertake an enquiry, no statement on the subject shall be issued or authorized for issue to the public either through the press or by any other channel without the consent of the ICRC.

(6) The ICRC is pledged to safeguard humanitarian rights in all circumstances, especially in time of war or civil disturbances. Its peculiar function, however, paramount over all others, is to guard the rights protected by the Geneva Conventions, (especially the relief of the sick and wounded and the treatment of prisoners), or by any other Conventions sponsored by the Red Cross.

If then the ICRC is led to undertake enquiries on the terms set out above, they should refer primarily to infringements of the cited Conventions. Enquiries into breaches of the laws of warfare in general, and in particular to the rules relating to the usages of war can be admitted only in exceptional cases as coming within the competence of the ICRC.

In application of the principles stated in its memorandum to Governments, the ICRC on Sept. 13, 1939, gave the necessary instructions to its delegates, adding that if circumstances were such that the delegate became witness of certain events, he should report this exclusively to the ICRC, who alone had the competence to take action on the observations made.

During the whole of the war, the ICRC adhered to the principles laid down in its memorandum of September 12, 1939, according to which it could not agree to take part in any proceedings for establishing the evidence of violations, except

with the formal consent of all the States concerned. The Committee was sometimes compelled to refuse to participate in commissions of enquiry into actual cases, since the consent of one of the parties was not forthcoming, as for instance in the Katyn episode, of which an account will be given in the section of the present Report dealing with PW. (See below).

Where protests were received from a National Red Cross Society, chiefly concerning the bombardment of hospitals or ambulances, the torpedoing of hospital ships and the bombing from the air of civilian populations, they were automatically forwarded by the ICRC to the National Society of the country concerned, either in the original text, or in the shape of a *précis* of the main facts, according to the usual procedure laid down in such matters. An account of several of these protests will be found in the present Report.

When considered necessary, the Committee also drew the attention of the Society to the gravity of the alleged occurrences and asked to be put in a position to reply to the opposite side.

This procedure is obviously only of value in so far as the National Societies, in consequence of the influence they have on their Governments and by their sense of impartiality, are able to take useful action to have the incidents dispassionately examined by both parties.

One must confess that these transmissions have yielded only slight results, if indeed it be considered a positive result when the authorities of the country involved give an assurance that they have opened a thorough enquiry. We must not omit the fact that the American Red Cross sent the Committee replies in full detail, obtained from its Government, in the specific case of the Japanese protests, alleging attacks on hospital ships.

In some instances, National Societies requested the ICRC to bring their protests to the knowledge of all National Societies, and sometimes even to submit them to the public opinion of the world at large. The Committee did not consider it possible to adopt this course, since it was unable itself to form a considered opinion with regard to allegations which it could not verify by investigations on the spot. It did on the other hand sometimes publish in the "*Revue internationale*" reports dealing

with alleged violations, on the basis of information received from Red Cross Societies. Thus in January 1944, the Committee gave publicity to an account of the alleged violations of the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907 in the war in the Far East. The publication dealt with the protests of the Australian and Japanese Red Cross Societies with regard to the torpedoing or bombing of hospital ships. The ICRC had forwarded these to the Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned, and had asked to have a reply to transmit to the plaintiff Societies. The same procedure was followed in the case of every protest forwarded to the Committee by the Red Cross Societies of all the belligerent States.

Protests from Governments were forwarded by the ICRC to the Government of the country in question. The majority of protests from Governments were, however, usually transmitted by diplomatic channels, through the intermediary of a Protecting Power. Some of the Governments maintained that they could agree to receive no protests except those which reached them by this channel. The ICRC persisted none the less in the practice of transmission from one Red Cross Society to another, as was its custom.

An account of the policy pursued by the ICRC with regard to protests was given to the Preliminary Conference (1946) and approved.

(D). CO-OPERATION AND LIAISON WITH THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The statutes of the International Red Cross provide in Article IX that the ICRC and the League shall co-operate in those fields which affect equally the work of both, especially in those concerned with relief work, in the case of national or international calamities. This co-operation is assured in particular by the appointment of a representative accredited to the League by the ICRC, and of one accredited to the ICRC by the League.

On the outbreak of war, in September 1939, the Secretariat of the League, whose offices were in Paris, moved to Geneva.

The Committee was glad to help in this transfer, especially by steps with the Swiss authorities, since this solution, in its own view, would greatly facilitate friendly and efficient co-operation. As a matter of fact, the co-existence in the same town of these two organizations made possible joint action which, in the field of relief for the civil populations, increased to a very considerable degree. Frequent and close relations were at once established, and towards the middle of the war took shape in regular meetings. The principal matters in which the ICRC and the League co-operated were the following :

1. Relief measures in behalf of the civil population

It was in this field, as stated above, that the common task assumed a wide significance.

Joint relief work was set on foot from September 1939 in behalf of Polish refugees, with the assistance of National Red Cross Societies, and similar action in May 1940 in behalf of Belgian, Dutch, French and Luxemburg refugees.

As the war dragged on and applications for relief became increasingly urgent, the organization of considerable operations over a prolonged period had to be considered. The ICRC proposed that the League should participate in the work which the former had to undertake in this field. To this end, the Committee and the League set up a special agency charged with carrying out relief work for the distressed civil population—more especially for women and children. Thus a joint office of the ICRC and the League took shape, and later, in July 1941, the " Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross ". By its statutes, this Commission was legally separate body, with civil personality.

The joint work of the ICRC and the League in the matter of relief, which was carried on successfully during the whole of the war and in the period immediately following, will be described in the Reports presented by the two organizations ¹ and in the Report of the Joint Commission.

¹ The part played by the ICRC is referred to in Vol. III of the present Report.

2. Measures in case of Natural Calamities

Independently of the co-operation given by the ICRC and the League to the International Relief Union, an account of which is given below, the two organizations carried on their work together in case of natural calamities, in the spirit of the resolutions passed at the International Red Cross Conferences.

Since the ICRC and the League had no funds specially allocated for the relief of populations stricken by natural disasters, they were only very rarely able to carry out any direct measures of relief.

Whenever a disaster of any magnitude affected any part of the globe, the ICRC and the League at once conferred and sent a joint telegram to the Red Cross Society of the country concerned, adding to the sympathy of the International Red Cross institutions, the suggestion that an appeal for help might be sent out to fellow Societies. When the scale of the catastrophe exceeded from the outset the capacity for relief of the national Red Cross Society, the latter sent an appeal for help to the International Red Cross institutions, and this was at once transmitted.

As a rule, appeals such as these were not communicated to all National Societies; the call was addressed only to those Societies whose geographical position and financial resources best fitted them to undertake immediate and effective action for relief.

During the war, international measures for relief brought about by joint appeals of the ICRC and the League were comparatively few. Indeed, the efforts of the National Societies as well as their resources served principally to support their wartime tasks.

The ICRC and the League took action, either direct or indirect, in the following relief schemes :

(1) In December 1939, after an earthquake in Turkey, the Committee and the League offered the Turkish Red Crescent to publish an appeal in its name. This was accepted, and a large number of National Societies responded in an effective fashion.

(2) On April 5, 1940, a joint telegram was sent to the Yugoslav Red Cross, following on the devastation of a province by floods.

(3) At the end of May 1940, the Peruvian Red Cross asked the ICRC and the League to forward an appeal for help to fellow Societies, an earthquake having destroyed four towns in Peru. This appeal was sent out to a large number of Societies of Latin America, who responded with great generosity.

(4) On November 11, 1940, part of Rumania was devastated by an earthquake. A joint telegram was addressed to the Rumanian Red Cross and the help of numerous Societies solicited.

(5) In November 1940 also, Yugoslavia again experienced serious floods, and a joint telegram was sent.

(6) On February 20, 1941, the Portuguese Red Cross reported that a hurricane had been raging over the country and requested help.

(7) A few days later, the Spanish Red Cross also solicited aid, a cyclone having laid waste the town of Santander. The usual joint cables were sent out, and numerous Red Cross Societies were invited by the ICRC and the League to come to the aid of the Spanish and Portuguese Societies.

(8) In March 1941, a joint telegram was sent to the Greek Red Cross, in consequence of an earthquake which had destroyed the town of Larissa. Twelve Red Cross Societies were invited to send help and did so generously.

(9) On January 19, 1944, an earthquake afflicted the Argentine, and a joint cable was sent to the Red Cross of that country. The latter replied that no appeal to fellow Societies was required.

(10) In August 1944, an earthquake devastated a city in Persia. The ICRC and the League decided to contribute to relief measures by a gift of 5,000 Swiss francs. This was forwarded to the Red Lion and Sun of Persia, through the Joint Relief Commission as intermediary.

(11) On October 24, 1944, a joint appeal was addressed to numerous Red Cross Societies of North and South America on behalf of the Cuban Red Cross, a cyclone having laid waste the province of Havana. Many contributions to the relief fund were made on this occasion.

(12) In August 1946, a joint cable was sent to the Red Cross of San Domingo, a considerable part of the territory of the Dominican Republic having suffered from an earthquake. On this occasion, various Red Cross Societies made contributions.

(13) Three months later, in November 1946, another earthquake having devastated a Japanese province, the ICRC and the League addressed a joint telegram to the Japanese Red Cross, which however made known that the help of other National Societies was not required.

(14) In March 1947, floods occurred in Bolivia. A joint telegram was addressed to the Red Cross of that country, and an appeal sent out to all the Red Cross Societies of North and South America. It was possible on this occasion to send extensive relief to Bolivia.

3. International Relief Union

On July 12, 1927, twenty-one States, for the most part members of the League of Nations, signed a Convention in Geneva establishing an International Relief Union (UIS), and gave statutes to this body, which came into existence through the long considered proposal of the Italian Senator Giovanni Ciraolo. Article 2 of this Convention defined the purpose of the Union, which is primarily to supply emergency aid to populations who have become the victims of natural calamities, and to assemble for this purpose gifts, resources and help of every kind, action by the Union being limited to calamities occurring on the territory of the High Contracting Parties. The resources of the institution consist of a capital fund subscribed by the signatory States, of voluntary grants made by Governments, and of funds collected from the public and special donations.

The Convention governing the Union, as well as its statutes, assign an important role to the Red Cross.

Article 5 of the Convention lays down that the constitution and operation of the Union call for the free co-operation of the Red Cross. The latter may sit on the General Council of the Union, and are members of its Executive Council, in both cases in an advisory capacity.

Moreover, by an agreement concluded on July 14, 1933, the ICRC and the League had assumed responsibility for the working of the Central Permanent Office of the UIS. This office, which consisted of an administrative section and a secretariat, was installed in the offices of the two institutions, the financial section alone remaining independent.

However, in view of the moderate resources of the ICRC and the League, and in order to leave to the UIS the responsibility for organizing an autonomous secretariat, at its own expense, the agreement of 1933 was modified by common consent on August 1, 1939, and replaced by a provisional arrangement, to remain in force until Sept. 15, 1941. Under its terms, the ICRC and the League would make available for the UIS premises in Geneva and a conference room at the office of the League, at that time in Paris; furthermore, the UIS was to have certain work done free of charge, the services of an accountant, and a half share in the salary costs of a secretary and a shorthand-typist.

From Sept. 15, 1941, onwards, this agreement ceased to be in force. Since the war continued, and the resources of the ICRC and the League were absorbed by important and urgent duties, these two organizations were obliged to reduce their share in the expenses of the UIS. The Union was, however, able to maintain a small permanent secretariat in premises lent to it by the ICRC.

Furthermore, the ICRC and the League, on the one hand, and the UIS on the other, studied the means of keeping in being the work of the Union, and a certain degree of free co-operation. On Nov. 27/28, 1942, a Conference was held in Geneva between representatives of the ICRC and the League under Senator Ciraolo, chairman of the Executive Committee of the UIS. Methods of work were sought, which could be adapted to any particular circumstances of the existing state of war.

The reconstitution of the Central Permanent Office, as it existed until 1939, could not be considered. But means were taken to keep the UIS working for the duration of the war, and to prepare it for the exercise of its functions, when circumstances should allow the satisfactory execution of the tasks for which it was originally set up. To this end, the ICRC and the League appointed representatives, whose duty it would be to keep in regular contact with M. de Montenach, Secretary-General of the UIS. The latter was himself frequently in touch with the Chairman of the Executive Committee to whom, from the outbreak of the war, the UIS had delegated sole power to represent it.

In 1943, as a result of the state of war in Italy, it became impossible for Senator Ciraolo, who lived in Rome, to carry out his duties and to exercise the powers conferred on him. He therefore asked the ICRC and the League to direct the affairs of the UIS until such time as the heads of these organizations could make appropriate arrangements. On Oct. 6, 1943, the ICRC and the League replied that they agreed in principle to assume the office of *negotiorum gestor* for the period proposed, in view of the unusual situation. They made clear that it could only be a matter of directing the ordinary business of the UIS, without incurring any responsibility for the investment of funds. M. de Montenach, Secretary-General of the UIS, meanwhile resigned office, and the ICRC and the League proposed M. L. Pedrazzini, Swiss citizen, who appeared specially qualified. On Oct. 22, M. Pedrazzini was appointed Acting Secretary-General by M. Ciraolo.

Finally, on Nov. 9, 1945, the war being at an end, M. Ciraolo informed the Committee and the League that the resuming of international relations allowed him to assume once more his duties. He sent his thanks to them, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the UIS, for the *negotiorum gestio* the two institutions had ensured for a period of two years.

4. Highway Emergency Aid

The Permanent International Commission for Highway Emergency Aid (CIPSR) was set up in 1931, following on a

resolution of the XIVth International Red Cross Conference, expressing the wish that the International Red Cross and the Central Council for International Travel should appoint delegates to form a permanent commission. This Commission would be instructed to apply general rules for the organization of emergency relief on the highways. Until the war, the CIPSR, with which the ICRC, the League and several National Societies co-operated, and the Secretariat of which was supplied by the League, was represented at all the International Red Cross Conferences, and took part in any Congress dealing with first aid problems. It succeeded in designing a standard equipment for emergency aid posts on the highways, which was adopted by about thirty countries.

The war stopped its work, but once it had come to an end, the CIPSR was reconstituted and resumed its task, as the result of a resolution of the Consultative Conference of Red Cross Societies convened by the League in October 1945. The first meeting took place at Geneva, Feb. 5-6, 1946, under the chairmanship of Dr. Béhague ; a series of resolutions was passed relating to the future of the CIPSR, to safety on the highways and to first aid.

A second meeting, which was equally fruitful, was held in Oxford, July 12-13, 1946.

5. The Empress Shôken Fund

The purpose of the Empress Shôken Fund is to subsidize National Red Cross Societies or their relief work in time of peace, especially in the campaign against contagious diseases, and in helping the victims of public disasters. It is administered by a joint Commission, comprising three representatives of the ICRC and three of the League. A report on the administration of this Fund and the allocation of its revenue will be presented jointly by the ICRC and the League to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

6. Joint Publications

The ICRC and the League are responsible for the joint publication of the " Manuel de la Croix-Rouge internationale "

and the "Annuaire de la Croix-Rouge internationale", two publications which are greatly appreciated by the National Societies. The seventh edition of the "Manuel" having been exhausted, the ICRC and the League brought out a new edition in 1942. The publication of the "Annuaire" was suspended during the war: it was impossible for the ICRC and the League to get details in time for printing from the National Societies, but the issue was resumed in 1946.

Besides these, the ICRC and the League frequently publish joint circulars and communiqués.

Relief to civil populations, the Joint Relief Commission, natural calamities, International Relief Union, Highways Emergency Aid, the Empress Shôken Fund, and joint publications were thus the fields in which co-operation between the ICRC and the League took on a permanent and visible form. Furthermore, the presence in Geneva of the League Secretariat enabled the two international Red Cross organizations to be in daily contact, regarding questions of the greatest variety.

As a federation of all the National Societies, the League was able to help in co-ordinating the work of the Societies and to make calls on their resources, especially in the case of those who belonged to a country not at war.

Since it was represented in almost all the belligerent countries by delegates who also acted on behalf of the Joint Relief Commission, the ICRC was able by its action and negotiations to repair the breaks which the war threatened to make in the long chain of National Red Cross Societies. Though the latter preserved the spirit of impartiality that lies at the very root of their existence, the fact remains that the nations were at war.

Thus, the League and the ICRC, each one working in its own field, sometimes separately, often jointly, were able to safeguard the links which must always exist between the fellow Societies. It is perhaps in this connection that the co-operation set up in Geneva, by discussions, personal talks and regular meetings, had its most useful results for the very idea and future of the Red Cross.

VII. Relations of the ICRC with Governments — Development of International Law

(A). RELATIONS OF THE ICRC WITH GOVERNMENTS

In time of war, the ICRC is obliged to maintain regular and practically uninterrupted relations with Governments.

First, there are the contacts called for by the application of the Conventions. It is perhaps not out of place to mention that the humanitarian Conventions are the concern of Governments. It is true they derive from the inspiration and efforts of the Red Cross, but it is the Governments alone which are responsible for their application.

The PW Convention of July 27, 1929, recognizes explicitly the intervention of the ICRC. But, whether that intervention refers to the Central Agency, the organization of which the Committee is instructed to "propose" to the Powers, or whether it concerns the other humanitarian activities in behalf of PW which Art. 88 leaves to the initiative of Geneva, it is still subject to the sanction of the Powers concerned.

A consent in principle is not enough; nor does this consent constitute an assignment of powers to the ICRC. It does not automatically provide it with the material means for making its undertakings effective. Once the Central Agency, which is to serve as liaison between the official information bureaux of the belligerent Powers is set up, the methods of liaison must be fixed and the Agency must be kept supplied with lists and with news. As regards visits to camps, the Powers have practically never given delegates a general authorization, once and for all, to make visits how and when they pleased. Again, the facts

gathered on such visits demand further negotiations, either on the spot by the delegates, or by the ICRC, with local or higher authorities, in order to obtain the improvements desired. Finally, when it is a question of organizing a vast system of relief to operate across the fighting zones and through blockades and counter-blockades, and when countries are completely militarized by total war, the least move may give rise to a considerable problem. In these conditions it is easy to see that the transport, first by sea and then by land, of thousands of tons of goods requires, between the loading in the countries of origin and the distribution in the camps, countless parleys with Governments and ceaseless applications to the administrative departments.

When it is seen how much difficulty besets the ICRC in carrying out its traditional duties based on the Conventions, it will be readily understood that undertakings outside the scope of the Conventions entail even more frequent negotiations with the public authorities in the belligerent countries, ranging over every grade in the civil and military administration. Consider the negotiations the ICRC had to undertake, in order that civilian internees and captured "partisans" should be put on the same footing as PW. In the same way, the more or less successful attempts made to help the starving civil populations, Jews or deportees, involved the ICRC and its representatives almost daily in still further discussions, applications and persistent interviews with the authorities concerned.

The character of these relations varied ; at times they were fairly straightforward, at others they needed much perseverance. Often, the representatives of the ICRC found in one country they were given practical facilities for their work, whilst in another country they were denied such assistance. Nevertheless, when it is remembered that the ICRC wields no material power and has no means of forcing a passage, that its representatives are everywhere merely foreigners : and as one reflects on the circumstances at the time when the Committee had the appearance very often of pleading in behalf of the enemy, and when its interventions were an explicit challenge to "total war"—then, it can be said that, all these things considered, its relations with the authorities it had to meet were good. Even

in those cases where its efforts were in vain, or its good offices declined, or it was forbidden to act in behalf of one or other class of war victims, the ICRC was treated by Governments with a consideration that transcended the personal merit of the individuals who spoke in its name. This in itself proves the moral authority which the Red Cross has acquired all over the world. Consequently, though a private organization, the ICRC negotiated virtually on the level of a Power with Foreign Ministers and in many countries its delegates, particularly those sent on special missions, received a welcome and a consideration usually reserved for men with a diplomatic status. This accounts for the fact that the amount contributed to the ICRC by Governments alone from 1939 to 1946 represents more than half the combined contributions of Governments and the National Red Cross Societies ¹.

There is no need to devote a special chapter to enumerating and describing the interventions of the ICRC with Governments, to its negotiations and appeals during these eight years of war and post-war period. Nor need we mention the contacts established the moment the war came to an end with a view to the revision of existing Conventions, and the drafting of new instruments. Every page of this Report will be informed with these measures and will bring them to mind. But it is necessary to remember that while the efforts of the ICRC are called forth by circumstances, they are dependent for their fulfilment on the means placed at its disposal: their completion and success too, are subject, above all, to the consent of the belligerents, to the understanding that Governments give to the work of humanity, to the facilities they grant to carry it out, or to the inertia and the obstacles which impair its success. In short, the undertakings of the ICRC depend on the disinterested respect which Powers attach to their own signature and to humanitarian principles, or to the particular advantages which they expect to derive from the application of those principles. The Governments which in one way or another facilitated the work of the ICRC should find here an expression of the gratitude that is owed to them.

¹ Fifty-five per cent. This represents "contributions" only. Advances made by the Swiss Government, and the funds raised in Switzerland and the private gifts of all the countries are not included.

(B). DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The ICRC has held the view, from the time of its foundation, that one of its main tasks was to strive for the development of international law for the protection of the victims of war. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the Committee was able to invoke the two major international Conventions adapted to meet the conditions of modern warfare, and which it had itself taken the chief part in promoting. These were the Geneva Conventions of July 27, 1929, the one relating to the sick and wounded of the armed forces and the other to prisoners of war.

Next in importance should be added the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907, adapting the Convention of Geneva to maritime warfare, and the few, very inadequate clauses of the Fourth and Fifth Hague Conventions, covering the civil population and internees in neutral countries.

The first effort of the ICRC which should be recorded under the above heading, was to seek further ratifications or accessions to the Geneva Conventions. At the outbreak of war it approached those States which were not yet bound by these fundamental treaties. The Committee would not claim that success was due solely to its own efforts, but it can point to the fact that between 1939 and 1945 five States ratified the Geneva Convention proper, and that six States signed the Convention relating to the treatment of prisoners of war.

New ground was broken with the attempt to persuade those States not party to the 1929 Prisoners of War Convention that, although they did not intend to make a diplomatic adhesion, they should nevertheless agree to apply the terms of the agreement to the prisoners in their hands, on condition of reciprocity, or, at least to apply those relevant clauses which allow the Red Cross to carry out its humanitarian duties. Some appreciable success was won in several countries, especially in Finland, and to some degree in Japan.

Likewise, the Committee tried to establish that the Conventions should apply in some situations where at least one of the belligerent considered that they were not applicable in law,

either on the grounds that it refused recognition of the Government of its opponent (for instance, Germany declined to recognize Poland and the Provisional Government of the French Republic), or because it refused to recognize a state of international war (partisan strife, alleged civil disturbances or police operations). The Committee, basing its action on the idea that the concern of the Red Cross is in the human being who suffers and not in the political affairs of States, made its intervention on each occasion to that end, and to the full extent of its powers. Its efforts on those lines were rewarded in many cases with concrete success, of which more extensive mention will be found elsewhere in this Report.

Another task was to secure the extension of the terms of the existing Conventions so that they might cover other classes of persons than those specified. Thus the ICRC obtained the agreement of the majority of the belligerent States (and that was, without any doubt, the most important achievement in this particular field) to extend the terms of the Prisoners of War Convention to Civil Internees within their territory at the outbreak of war—that is, on the basis of analogy. It also recommended to neutral States which had interned aliens, members of military forces, that they should apply the Geneva Conventions also to these men. There again, many States pledged themselves to this course, although in differing degrees.

The Committee also proposed to the States that, outside the framework of the existing Conventions, they should put into force the draft Conventions which it had prepared, but for which diplomatic sanction had not yet been given. This it did in regard to the Draft of 1934, called the Tokyo Draft, relating to the protection of civilians, as well as to the Draft of 1938, which sought to establish hospital localities and safety zones. The States, it is to be regretted, did not share its views. In regard to the latter Draft, it should be noted that the Committee tried hard, albeit in vain, to extend it, so that areas of security might be established for the protection of the civilian part of the population (women, children, the sick and aged) and of prisoners of war.

Another feature of the work of the Committee in the develop-

ment of international law was its attempts to secure from the Powers bilateral or multilateral *ad hoc* agreements which, in scope, go beyond the texts of the Conventions or the draft instruments. In many fields the Committee succeeded in this way in easing appreciably the lot of the victims of war and in getting recognition of its authority to carry on new activities which the circumstances made necessary. The conclusion of such agreements led in some cases to formal and concordant declarations of the States concerned, and in other cases to *de facto* application.

The reader will find in the course of the Report numerous instances of similar agreements. We shall confine ourselves here to the visits by ICRC delegates to PW camps, to its organization of family messages between civilians separated by the war, and the plying in war zones of ships bearing the Red Cross emblem—three enterprises whose growth proved most remarkable. In other cases, such as the legal protection of PW conveyed by sea, the notification of the exact location of PW camps, the limitation of bombing from the air strictly to military objectives, the Committee did not succeed in its efforts.

From the time of its foundation, the Committee has persisted in working for the development of the humanitarian Conventions and striven to adapt them to the needs of the moment, or, failing that, to bring into play new arrangements. Its chief task in the period between the two wars has been the preparation of draft Conventions, and especially of the Convention relative to the treatment of PW, which, signed in 1929, has provided during the recent conflict protection for millions of PW. Other draft Conventions, some of them revised texts, and some of them new documents prepared by the ICRC in co-operation with Government Experts and National Red Cross Societies, were due for official confirmation at a Diplomatic Conference convened by the Swiss Federal Council to meet for this object at the beginning of 1940. The outbreak of war, unhappily, compelled the postponement of the Conference.

During the recent War, the greater part of the resources of the Committee were absorbed by its extensive and urgent relief

work. Nevertheless, at no time did it lose sight of the fact that it would be necessary, as soon as the war was over, to assemble the fruits of its experience gained during the tragic years, and thereby to develop and complete the rulings of international law in the humanitarian field. To this end, all the documents in its archives which have a bearing on that research have been classified.

In a memorandum of February 15, 1945, that is, even before the end of the fighting, the ICRC sent word to Governments and to National Red Cross Societies throughout the world that it was setting about the task of preparing the revision of the Conventions and of completing new humanitarian agreements. It had taken similar action after 1918, for it considered its duty lay in making that contribution to the problem for which its almost world-wide activities, its experience and its comprehensive records qualified it. In the same memorandum, the Committee sought the co-operation of Governments and of National Red Cross Societies : it called on them to make their own particular collection of relevant material, to classify it and to make a summary of it.

These proposals were received favourably by a great number of States and Red Cross Societies. The ICRC then set about its project, using methods similar to that which it had employed after the first World War, comprising an exhaustive preliminary collection of documents. The next stage was to emphasize those items of public international law which required confirmation, completion or modification, and to establish, with the support of Red Cross Societies and Governments, the drafts of revised Conventions and of new Conventions, to be submitted in due course to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference and finally, if the Powers approved, to a Diplomatic Conference.

The ICRC, in October 1945, in the first place, consulted as experts, the neutral members of the Mixed Medical Commissions, who during the war had had the duty of examining sick and wounded PW and of deciding upon their eligibility for repatriation. The Committee then submitted its proposals and its initial drafts to the " Preliminary Conference of the National Red Cross Societies for the study of the Conventions and of

various problems relative to the Red Cross". This was called by the ICRC at Geneva, from July 26 to August 3, 1946, and was attended by one hundred and forty-five delegates of fifty nations, including sixteen presidents of National Red Cross Societies.

The Committee noted the numerous and important suggestions made by National Societies and made a serious study of them during the months that followed, thus completing a comprehensive documentation. Once again it consulted in March, 1947, the representatives of both the lay and the religious bodies which had, in co-operation with it, brought intellectual and spiritual succour to the victims of the war.

Later, there met at Geneva between April 14 and 26, 1947, the "Conference of Government Experts for the study of Conventions for the Protection of War Victims". Seventy delegates represented fifteen Allied Governments, each of which had first-hand experience of the matters for deliberation. On the basis of the proposals of the ICRC and of the views put forward by the National Societies, that Conference established revised drafts for the Geneva Convention of 1929 for the relief of the sick and wounded, for the Xth Hague Convention of 1907 for the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention of 1906, and for the Convention signed at Geneva on July 27, 1929 relative to the treatment of PW. Further, the Conference completed the first draft of a new Convention for the protection of civilians in time of war ¹.

¹ In the following months, the ICRC proposes to complete the drafting of these documents, after giving due consideration to the views of the Governments which, although not present at the Conference in April, wished, nevertheless, to have a part in its work. These drafts will then be submitted to a Commission of National Red Cross Societies for the study of the Conventions before they are sent to all National Societies for discussion and approval by the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

PART II

WOUNDED AND SICK OF THE ARMED FORCES MEDICAL PERSONNEL

(A). GENERAL REMARKS

The Geneva Convention for the relief of the wounded and sick in armies in the field, which was signed in 1864 and revised in 1906 and 1929, has at all times been considered of special significance by the ICRC. This treaty, which was soon adopted throughout the world, not only formed the basis of the whole Red Cross movement, but was also a definite turning-point in the evolution of the law of nations, and of attempts to bring humane influence into warfare.

The Geneva Convention was the only treaty by which all Powers engaged in the second World War were bound. On September 4, 1939, the ICRC urged upon all belligerent States that the Convention should be applied in full.

Although the main purpose, in practice, of the Convention is the protection of PW and civilian victims of war, the ICRC, throughout the period 1939-45, took its stand on this fundamental and traditional charter to invoke, on many occasions, the principles that inspire it, especially in its appeals for the protection of civil populations against air bombardments. It was in that spirit that it sent out its Memoranda of September 13, 1939, and March 15, 1944, concerning the establishment of Hospital Localities and Safety Zones, and its Note of August¹ 17, 1944, on the subject of Partisans.

In the years since 1929, the Committee studied those points of the Convention which required improvement, and a revised

draft was made in 1937, following on a meeting of Government Experts convened by the ICRC. This draft, after being submitted to the Sixteenth International Red Cross Conference held in London in 1938, was placed on the agenda of the Diplomatic Conference which the Swiss Government intended to convene at the beginning of 1940, but which, owing to the second World War, had to be postponed. At the close of hostilities, the Committee again took up the 1937 Draft and completed it, with the experience of six years of warfare, and with the help of Government Experts and National Red Cross Societies. The revised draft will be submitted to the Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference.

(B). THE WOUNDED, SICK AND DEAD

1. Wounded and Sick

The wounded and sick of the armed forces become PW when they fall into the hands of the adverse party. It is in the various sections concerning PW of this Report that the many activities of the ICRC in favour of the wounded and sick captured by the enemy will be made clear¹.

The care of the wounded and sick, either in the field or with their own armed forces devolved entirely on the Army Medical Services and on the National Red Cross Societies of the respective countries. In these circumstances, the ICRC was not called upon to act. It may be recalled, however, that before the war, the Committee co-operated with the Army Medical Services and National Red Cross Societies in the training of nurses and voluntary auxiliary personnel, and from 1925 to 1938 took a prominent lead in the work of the International Standing Commission for the Study of Ambulance Equipment, which is placed under its auspices.

¹ The question of setting up Hospital Localities to shelter the sick and wounded of the armed forces, are treated together with those relating to Safety Zones for certain categories of the civil population. See below.

In a few cases, the ICRC was requested to give its aid in arranging the despatch of medical equipment for the sick and wounded of the armed forces, or for their transit through the blockaded areas ¹.

On September 8, 1939, the American Red Cross expressed a wish to help relieve the suffering caused by the war and asked the Committee to enquire from the National Red Cross Societies of belligerent States what medical equipment they might eventually require. This generous offer was immediately communicated by the ICRC to the Societies concerned. The British, French and Polish Red Cross Societies accepted it, and specified the material they needed ; other Societies stated that they required no help for the time being.

In August 1940, the ICRC, after approaching the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London, was given an assurance that medicaments and dressings from overseas for the sick and wounded in Europe should be allowed through the blockade, with the reservation that this should apply only to medical equipment and pharmaceutical supplies, within the strict meaning of these terms.

In November 1939 and May 1940, the Committee forwarded 274 cases to the German Red Cross, weighing about 17 tons, of foodstuffs, clothing, soap and absorbent cotton wool, presented by the Brazilian Red Cross.

Early in December 1939, the Finnish authorities requested the ICRC to act as an intermediary in the purchase of dressings and minor surgical instruments. The ICRC was, within a short time, able to send four postal packets containing the material required. It later received from Swiss donors dressings and medical supplies which enabled it to send 54 cases to Finland in March and April 1940. It was entrusted with the purchase of a field ambulance for the Finnish Red Cross on behalf of various donors, and with the forwarding of hospital linen and dressings to a total value of 13,000 Swiss francs.

¹ These particular relief activities have been included, as an exception, in this volume instead of in Vol. III.

During August 1941, the ICRC was requested by the Australian Red Cross to supply information concerning the equipment and medical supplies which it would be useful to send to the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the Soviet Union. Having obtained the information from Moscow and sent it on to Melbourne, the Committee was informed on March 9, 1942, that the Australian Red Cross was sending for the Alliance, 1,166 cases of medicaments and medical equipment to a value of over 19,000 Australian pounds. This was followed by a second consignment in 1942, to a value of over 10,000 pounds.

In the course of relief activities carried out by the ICRC for the civil population of the St. Nazaire, La Rochelle, Lorient and Dunkirk regions in the spring of 1945, the local German authorities asked that medicaments might also be supplied for seriously wounded German soldiers in hospital in these towns. The Committee obtained permission from the French Government for these medicaments to be sent through France, but the war came to an end before the consignment had left Germany.

2. The Dead

Article 4 of the Geneva Convention provides that belligerents shall communicate to each other, on reciprocal terms and as soon as possible, the names of the wounded, sick and dead collected on the field of battle, together with any indications which may assist in their identification ; that they shall establish and transmit death certificates ; that they shall collect and transmit all personal effects found on the field, or on the dead. The Article does not, however, specify by what means this information shall be communicated. Since the sick and wounded collected by the adversary are PW, Art. 77 of the 1929 PW Convention, which provides for the transmission of information through the official Bureaux and the Central Agency, applies also to sick and wounded PW, and thus avoids any ambiguity.

With regard to enemy dead collected on the field of battle, however, nothing is laid down. The ICRC recommended that

belligerents should adopt the same procedure for those killed in action, as that in use for notifying and transmitting information on PW. In practice, the belligerent Powers almost invariably forwarded lists, telegrams and other documents concerning those killed in action and collected on the field of battle to the Central Agency. The steps taken by the ICRC in this respect, such as those having to do with notifications of death, or personal effects, were merged with those concerning prisoners who had died in captivity ¹.

The ICRC also attempted to improve the means of identifying the dead. The fact gave them some anxiety that, when fighting took place in rough country, or in desert sands, or in the jungle, the identification of bodies might prove impossible unless carried out immediately after an engagement. To this end, they instructed their delegations in April 1943, to remind the belligerents concerned of the obligations laid upon them under Art. 4 of the Geneva Convention, and to request that precise instructions should be given to the fighting forces in this connection.

As a result of the action taken, Australia, Germany, Italy and the United States communicated to the ICRC the regulations laid down for their forces and the instructions given to the troops. The delegation in Cairo informed the ICRC that British troops in the Middle East had received very precise and detailed instructions on the subject. The information received by the ICRC was conveyed to various authorities who had felt some concern in this matter.

Whenever there was opportunity, the Committee urged belligerents not only to provide their troops with identity discs, if possible of the model adopted by the International Commission for the Study of Ambulance Equipment, but that half the identity disc should always be removed from the body of each soldier who fell, before burial. The ICRC approached, in particular, the Japanese authorities, whose troops did not carry identity discs. This fact caused great difficulties in identification and had been brought to the Committee's attention by the Australian and United States authorities.

¹ See below "Deaths of PW" and Vol. II.

Sometimes the bodies of men who had been killed in action and who were often buried in a summary manner in nameless graves, had to be exhumed. Early in 1941, the French authorities instructed the mayors of the communes to exhume the bodies of all men buried in their district during the Battle of France of 1940, to re-inter them in the parish burial grounds, and to recover any details likely to assist identification. These instructions were carried out and lists of those re-interred were forwarded by mayors to the ICRC.

In March 1946, the Committee was informed that experienced German PW had, with the consent of the British authorities, helped to lay out the cemetery of Cervia, in Italy. These PW had undertaken to identify German soldiers killed in action and to give them decent burial. The ICRC then arranged for similar detachments of German PW to perform the same duties in other Italian fighting zones. In May 1946, the Allied authorities were no longer able to assume the costs involved in this work. The Committee considered that the prisoners' work was of great help and comfort to the relatives of men killed in action, and in that way was in the nature of moral relief: it therefore advanced funds for the detachments to continue, while suggesting similar measures to other Powers, who had PW in their hands.

(C). MEDICAL PERSONNEL ¹

1. Identification of Members of Medical Personnel

Although the Geneva Convention, in Arts. 9, 10 and 11, gives a fairly precise definition of the different categories of Medical Personnel who are as such entitled to protection, disputes very often arose on this score between the belligerents

¹ For the sake of brevity, the term "Medical Personnel" is held to include all persons described in Arts. 9, 10 and 11 of the Geneva Convention, i.e. those detailed for the care of the wounded and sick of the armed forces, as well as those administering medical units and establishments, chaplains of the armed forces and the personnel of National Red Cross Societies, and other recognized Relief Societies performing similar functions.

during the war. These turned on the question of including amongst medical personnel pharmacists, dentists, convoy officers, and administrative staff, e.g. paymasters, medical personnel of non-combatant anti-aircraft defence, and others. The ICRC made every effort to settle these problems in the light of the treaty stipulations and of the facts of the case.

The Committee took the necessary steps for notice to be given of the formation of the Friends' Ambulance Units, auxiliary to the United States Army Medical Services, and for their protection, as provided for by Art. 11.

In order to be duly recognized, members of the medical personnel have to be provided with the means of identification laid down by Art. 21 of the Geneva Convention. Since the armlet issued and stamped by a military authority is not adequate proof of their status, the Convention also prescribes that medical personnel shall be supplied with a certificate of identity, either by an entry in the army paybook, or by a special document.

At the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC made a comprehensive enquiry from all National Societies as to the manner in which these stipulations were applied in the respective countries. The replies received showed that the prescribed measures were far from having been generally carried out. In many cases, the wearing of the armlet had been considered sufficient, and in some instances, the identity disc alone had apparently been judged adequate to prove medical personnel status.

In spite of many steps by the Committee, it was not always possible to get this situation improved. At the beginning of the War, therefore, many captured members of medical personnel were unable to get their status recognized. Medical personnel whose identity papers had been lost, or destroyed by accident or intention, were in the same case.

In some countries, moreover, medical personnel of enemy forces were often deprived of their identity paper on capture, or on arrival in camp, by the military authorities into whose hands they had fallen. This practice constituted an infringement of Art. 21, Sec. 5 of the Convention, and led to strong protest by the ICRC. The authorities concerned usually admitted that the protest was justified and promised to return the papers to their

owners. Unfortunately, the restitution of identity papers was often rendered impossible or difficult by their loss or destruction, or by the fact that the owners had changed their camp or had been transferred from one detaining Power to another.

In most of these cases, the Committee was able to put things right by forwarding duplicate certificates, as provided by Sec. 6 of Art. 21¹.

The end of the war, however, created fresh difficulties, especially for German medical personnel. Since the competent official bodies in Germany who might have provided duplicate papers had ceased to exist, the Committee was no longer able to satisfy the great number of applications for certificates which came in from German medical PW, who had no other means of proving their status as protected personnel. The Committee tried to find a provisional solution by suggesting that the personnel concerned should be tested to prove their professional knowledge and ability: such tests however would hardly have proved conclusive, except in the case of medical officers. The ICRC then recommended that controversial cases should be examined with goodwill and that reliable witnesses amongst other PW should be called upon to give evidence. The British and United States authorities agreed in part to these suggestions, and a number of cases were satisfactorily settled in this way. The Committee also made attempts to have some organization set up in Germany, which would have the custody of German army records, on the basis of which certificates might be issued certifying the status of the medical personnel. It was not until early in 1947 that the Allied liquidation service for the official bureaux (WAST) was able to take charge of this work, and this enabled many members of the medical personnel who had not been recognized, finally to establish their identity and to benefit by the advantages and privileges to which protected personnel were entitled, and to have priority in repatriation.

2. Repatriation of Medical Personnel

The Geneva Convention in Art. 12, lays down the principle that medical personnel may not be detained after they have

¹ See Vol. II, Part II.

fallen into the hands of the enemy, and that they shall be repatriated, as soon as a route for their return is open and military considerations permit.

However, Art. 12, Sec. 2 and Art. 14, Sec. 4 of the 1929 PW Convention allow for some exceptions to this principle, in stipulating that by mutual agreement belligerents may retain some proportion of the medical personnel in the camps to care for their PW fellow-countrymen.

During the recent war, medical personnel was repatriated only in a comparatively small number of cases. The belligerents agreed to retain in the camps a large percentage of the medical personnel who were in their hands. Moreover, the repatriation of these men met with the same practical difficulties as that of the seriously sick and wounded, caused by the lack of transport and the fact that certain zones of operation could not be crossed.

In December 1940, therefore, the British and German Governments agreed to retain the personnel required to care for sick and wounded PW. Similar agreements were in time concluded between Great Britain and Italy, Greece and Italy, and within the terms of the armistice conventions, between France and Germany ; further, between the United States and Italy, and the United States and Germany. These agreements were concluded through the intermediary of the Protecting Power.

It should be noted that the British Government, at the outbreak of war, had contemplated leaving enemy medical personnel to make their own choice between being sent home, or remaining in the camps to care for their PW fellow-countrymen. This system of voluntary aid soon proved inadequate, and it was decided to retain such personnel for these duties.

Belligerents later on came to mutual agreements concerning the percentage of medical personnel to be retained in relation to the number of PW in their hands. Thus, Great Britain and Italy retained two doctors, two dentists, two chaplains and twelve orderlies for every thousand PW ; in South Africa, the proportion was four doctors, four dentists, four chaplains and nineteen orderlies, and in the United States two doctors, one dentist, one chaplain and six orderlies to every thousand men.

Although the ICRC raised no protest against measures which the Powers considered necessary in the interest of PW, it constantly urged the repatriation of surplus medical personnel, and took steps in its promotion. The repatriation by groups, which were usually carried out at the same time as those of the seriously wounded, remained infrequent, slow and comparatively small in number.

Acting on the strength of the reports submitted by its delegates after visits to camps and of applications from the camp leaders or the men themselves, the Committee was able to achieve positive results in many individual cases.

In Germany, despite the agreements, a very large number of French medical personnel were held indefinitely in camps, without their services being used. Many were in fact improperly compelled to perform duties other than the care of the sick and wounded. To justify these measures, the German authorities argued that the formation of a "reserve" was necessary, in order to be ready for any events, such as the effects of air raids or a sudden influx of PW, or in case epidemics should break out in camps. The ICRC observed that these measures were contrary to Art. 12, and even to the special agreements concluded between belligerents. In spite of numerous steps and protests by the Committee, there were in Germany, in 1944, nearly 20,000 French surplus medical personnel. The Belgian and Dutch medical personnel were in a similar position.

The German authorities also opposed the repatriation of Polish and Yugoslav medical personnel, on the grounds that their countries of origin were occupied, and that the occupying authorities refused, for security reasons, to allow the return of released PW.

After the capitulation of Italy, a certain number of Italian medical personnel were interned by the Germans, either in Italy, in Germany or in the Balkans. Since Italian combatants were not considered as PW, this medical personnel was refused the benefit of the Conventions, and whilst the efforts made by the ICRC in its behalf were not always successful, they nevertheless led to the repatriation of part of them.

In Germany, members of the medical personnel who were of

Jewish origin were invariably retained and placed in the "reserve" units already mentioned, and a separate camp was even set up for this purpose. Moreover, many of them were obliged to perform other duties, in spite of frequent interventions by the Committee. Doctors of enemy nationality and of Jewish origin were even sent to the Eastern Front to look after cases of exanthematic typhus amongst the troops.

The German authorities also attempted to refuse sick medical personnel the right of being examined by Mixed Medical Commissions for their repatriation on grounds of health, on the pretext that medical personnel were not PW. The ICRC maintained the standpoint, however, that since medical personnel had a privileged status in comparison with that of PW, they should at least benefit by all the rights of PW, and it carried its argument.

The negotiations of the Committee with Japan and the Soviet Union, both States signatory to the Geneva Convention proper, to obtain the repatriation of medical personnel, were unsuccessful.

On many occasions the ICRC urged the detaining Powers to make a more equitable allocation of medical personnel in their hands. In particular, it proposed and obtained the transfer of some Italian medical personnel from the Middle East to Great Britain, and from Tunisia to Sicily and Southern Italy.

The Committee met with further difficulties after the capitulation of the German forces, owing to the fact that the detaining Powers were disposed to retain as large a number as possible of medical personnel in captivity. The ICRC set about securing the repatriation of the surplus personnel and got satisfactory results, especially in Great Britain and the United States.

In France and the zones of occupation in Germany, a large number of surplus medical personnel were held back long after the end of the war.

In June 1946, the French Ministry of War asked retained medical personnel to state if they would accept duties other than the care of the sick and wounded. It was however made clear that those who accepted would cease to be considered as protected personnel and could no longer avail themselves of the Geneva Convention and the privileges attached. The ICRC

at once informed the French authorities that it was not admissible for medical personnel who accepted the proposal to be deprived of the rights conferred upon them by treaty stipulations, and in particular, of the right to repatriation ; such a course would be contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention. In the end, the French authorities, on the basis of experience gained in the United States, fixed the proportion of retained protected personnel at 1.1 per cent (one doctor and ten orderlies to one thousand PW), which corresponded with the needs of camp infirmaries and hospitals. The repatriation of surplus personnel did not, however, take place with all the speed desired ; it was delayed by certain formalities (census, screening, fresh allocations), but by June 1947, it was possible to consider the situation normal. Nevertheless, the ICRC received a number of complaints following this repatriation. Although the standards of selection adopted had reference to age, length of captivity and family circumstances, repatriation was no less dependent on the qualifications of those concerned. The result was that the more competent medical officers and orderlies were retained, and the less qualified had been released.

Some belligerent countries had considered "relieving" medical officers in captivity by others sent from their own country of origin, then occupied. This system was tried, without great success however, in the case of the Yugoslavs, and especially of the French detained in Germany.

The ICRC was not called upon to give its views on any measure taken without its concurrence, and as a result of agreements concluded by the Powers concerned. It did, however, intervene sometimes, acting on requests from individuals. The Committee transmitted to the authorities responsible the applications of medical officers who wished to be replaced ; it took steps to determine the status of medical officers sent to replace their colleagues, and satisfied itself that medical officers held were indeed released, in accordance with the agreements made.

In 1945 and 1946, a scheme was submitted to the ICRC for the replacement of German medical officers and orderlies detained in France and Great Britain, by personnel from Germany. The Committee replied that it could not approve a

method of release which entailed the deportation, more or less by force, of persons who would not have the benefit of the treaty status enjoyed by their predecessors.

Nurses. — The Committee's activities in behalf of medical personnel naturally extended to the nurses belonging to the medical services of armed forces and to National Red Cross Societies of the belligerent States. It devoted special attention to helping those who were deprived of the protection of their own National Red Cross, as a result of the war. For instance, when local branches of the French Red Cross Society reported that a great number of nurses were missing after the invasion of France in 1940, it opened enquiries in their behalf. Likewise, when the German Red Cross ceased to exist in 1945, German nurses and auxiliary personnel enlisted the support of the ICRC for the numerous questions which concerned them: the re-organization of their training schools, the payment of salaries in arrears, appointments abroad, and similar matters.

The steps taken by the Committee for the repatriation of nurses formed part of its efforts in behalf of medical personnel as a whole.

When the war came to an end it was, however, in particular concerned by the circumstance that a great many nurses were still held in captivity and often compelled to do agricultural work, or even to help in the reconstruction of roads and railways. The Committee made urgent representations to the detaining Powers, to obtain that nurses and auxiliary personnel who were enrolled in the Medical Services of the armed forces or in Red Cross units with similar duties, should be part of the medical personnel under the protection of the Geneva Convention. In nearly all cases it obtained satisfaction, and the nurses were repatriated or detained to look after their own countrymen. Some countries however detained surplus nursing personnel, in case of the outbreak of epidemics in PW or internee camps.

The ICRC also took steps to ensure that repatriated nurses were given accommodation on their return to the various zones of occupation in Germany. To this end, a system of adoption in the case of training-schools, the buildings of which had been

destroyed, was set up, and every nurse without a home found a lodging on her return.

When the war had ended, some medical officers and orderlies and especially nurses, were prosecuted in their own country for having joined the medical service of the German armed forces or the German Red Cross during the occupation of their country. These persons often incurred heavy sentences under the penal laws of their country of origin where, in some cases, the offence was held to amount to an act of high treason. A number of them appealed to the ICRC to intervene in their behalf.

Whilst the Committee refrained from taking any stand on cases of this kind, which might prove involved, it did however urge on the judicial authorities and National Societies of the countries in question, that to place these persons on the same footing as those who had taken up arms against their country would in its view be contrary to the spirit of the Geneva Convention, which enjoins the care of all war victims, irrespective of nationality. The ICRC expressed the opinion that these persons should not be punished for the humanitarian aid they had given, in all cases at least where they could prove that they had found it impossible to perform their regular duties in their national units.

3. Treatment of retained Medical Personnel

Art. 13 of the Geneva Convention for the wounded and sick provides that belligerents shall ensure to enemy medical personnel, whilst in their hands, the same food, lodging, allowances and pay as those granted to the corresponding personnel of their own armed forces. Since the structure of the Convention, as may be recalled, is based on the repatriation of all medical personnel, this stipulation clearly applies first and foremost to personnel awaiting repatriation. On the other hand, both this Convention and that dealing with PW are silent as to the treatment of medical personnel detained in camps over a long period for the care of their PW fellow-countrymen.

The belligerents were, as a rule, inclined to place medical personnel on the same terms of treatment in detention as PW, and even in some cases, to consider them as such. The ICRC

strongly protested against the placing of medical personnel on the same footing as PW, declaring that this practice was inadmissible under treaty law as it stood ; it also stressed their rights to privileged treatment.

In this respect, it attempted to obtain that medical personnel should be given separate lodging within the infirmary itself or close by, and these requests were usually granted.

With regard to pay, in spite of agreements between the belligerent Powers, disputes arose, caused for instance by variations in the exchange. These difficulties gave rise to many complaints and interventions by the Committee.

In Germany, the ICRC was successful in obtaining that medical personnel who were not in charge of the sick and wounded should have the same pay as their comrades who performed these duties. The German authorities, however, refused to make up arrears of pay to those whose status was only given recognition after their capture.

The French authorities agreed to give German medical personnel, who had received a duplicate of their identity card or an affidavit proving that they belonged to a unit of the army medical service, the pay to which they were normally entitled, and to make up arrears from the date of their capture.

The ICRC also made the request to the belligerents that, in addition to the privileges provided by Art. 13 of the Convention, they should allow medical personnel certain specific advantages, to assist them in carrying out their medical duties and to compensate them for not being repatriated. In certain cases, therefore, medical personnel had a right to extra food rations, were allowed to leave camp and to take walks, with or without escort, and to receive twice the number of letters and parcels allowed to PW.

However, since these privileges had no legal basis, they were granted in varying measure by the detaining Powers, and the ICRC could only put forward suggestions in this respect.

In June 1944, the Committee proposed that the detaining Powers should issue certificates to medical officers who, through their service in PW camps, had been able to gain experience as specialists in some particular branch of medicine or surgery.

This suggestion was accepted by Germany, later by Great Britain as applying to the United Kingdom, the Dominions, Egypt and India, and in 1947 by France and Yugoslavia ; the United States, on the other hand, declined to accept.

The certificates were made out in triplicate ; the original was handed to the doctor concerned, one copy remained in the hospital files, and the other was forwarded to the ICRC to be kept in its records, in order that a duplicate might be issued in case of loss.

(D). THE DISTINCTIVE EMBLEM

The device of the Red Cross on a white field is above all the emblem of the Geneva Convention. This treaty confers upon it high significance, by making it the very symbol of the protection given to sick and wounded members of the armed forces, to the buildings which shelter them, to the personnel who nurse them and to the equipment and stores devoted to their use.

The Geneva Convention is the only one which, in Arts. 19 to 24 (1929), lays down rules for the use of the Red Cross emblem, unless we except Art. 5 of the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907 for the application to Maritime Warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention of 1906, and which refers explicitly to this Convention.

A clear distinction must be drawn between two different ways of using the emblem of the Red Cross.

In the first aspect of its use, (and herein lies its special significance), the emblem forms in some degree a *constituent* part of the protection, when it is displayed on buildings, personnel and equipment for which the Convention demands respect. This aspect of its use assumes a practical value in time of war and in the zone of military operations : the emblem is then given large dimensions as a rule, in order that it may be visible, especially from aircraft.

In the second aspect of its use, the emblem is *descriptive* only, whether in peace time, or in war time outside the fighting area, and has no protective function. It serves to call public attention

to buildings, publications, etc., and in these cases is mostly on a small scale.

It is quite certain that it is, above all, when the emblem forms a constituent part of the protection that the most scrupulous care has to be taken that the emblem of the Red Cross shall not be employed except within the limits fixed by the Conventions, or by a special agreement between the Powers concerned. These precautions are vital to ensure respect of the emblem, and to safeguard its authority. The existence within a war zone of buildings or objects improperly marked with the Red Cross emblem is indeed likely to compromise the safety of those who display it legitimately.

The ICRC was asked on many occasions if civilian hospitals, welfare institutions or prisons had the right to make use of the distinctive emblem. The invariable answer was that the benefit of protection and the use of the emblem was confined to establishments of the Army medical services, of the National Red Cross Societies and other officially recognized voluntary relief organizations¹.

Nevertheless, extended use of the emblem, without due consideration, even when only "descriptive", involves a risk of diminishing the significance which belongs to this emblem: it might, too, injure the good name of the organization itself, especially as it is, at times, difficult for the enemy to distinguish the "descriptive" use of the emblem from its employment as a constituent in protection.

During the recent war, alleged cases of abuse of the Red Cross emblem were brought to the knowledge of the ICRC. The Committee never failed, in such circumstances, to recommend the National Society of the country concerned to make representations to its Government.

During the final phase of hostilities in Europe, grave abuses of the Red Cross emblem were reported to the ICRC, or established by its delegates. In such cases, it intervened direct with the Government concerned.

¹ The use of the Red Cross emblem for vehicles and vessels under control of the ICRC is dealt with in Vol. III, Part 2.

In June 1944, the Committee received a report from the French Red Cross of the abuse of the emblem by the occupying forces : the Red Cross had been placed on motor vehicles which obviously did not form part of the Medical Services. The ICRC instructed its Paris delegation to draw the attention of the German High Command in France to these facts. The Command issued an order on July 1, intimating that any person making an improper use of the emblem of the Red Cross would be liable to imprisonment.

In July and August 1944, various cases of abuse were reported to the ICRC, who sent two Notes on the subject to the Army High Command in Berlin, to which no reply was vouchsafed.

In August of the same year, the delegate in Genoa encountered two columns of lorries bearing the emblem of the Red Cross, which were carrying armed troops.

In the following month, in Belgium, the delegate reported having seen a convoy of lorries, during the last days of the occupation, all vehicles bearing the Red Cross, carrying troops, ammunition and aviation supplies. These incidents having been witnessed by its own representatives, the ICRC made a strong protest to the Army High Command in Berlin, on November 24. These authorities, without making any denial of the facts reported, promised to put a stop to these abuses.

(E). PROTESTS CONCERNING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

Protests made by belligerents when they considered that one or other clause of the Geneva Convention had been violated by the enemy, were as a rule transmitted to the other side, through the Protecting Power. Although the ICRC was, in most cases, kept informed of the representations in progress, it was only seldom called upon to intervene ; if it did take action on certain occasions, it did so as a result of complaints received direct, for the most part from National Red Cross Societies ; these were passed on to the National Society of the country involved ¹.

¹ See above p. 174

In general, most of the complaints thus forwarded elicited no reply ; if they were acknowledged, the answer was usually either confined to denying the alleged facts, or sometimes to asserting that the emblem was inadequately displayed, or entirely lacking.

The protests of chief importance which were addressed to the ICRC concerning attacks on military hospitals or medical units are given below. To these is added a protest against the non-recognition of hospital planes.

Greece. — November 1940, April and May 1941 : The Greek Red Cross lodged a protest with the Committee against the bombing of hospitals at Larissa and Janina.

July 1944 : Protest against the bombing and machine-gunning of some of its ambulances.

Italy. — May 1941 : The Italian Red Cross protested against the bombing of the Italian Military Hospital at Premeti, on the Greek-Albanian frontier.

November 1940 to February 1943 : The Italian Government and the Italian Red Cross informed the ICRC of about twenty instances of military hospitals and medical units having been bombed and machine-gunned by British aircraft in Abyssinia, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Although protests on the subject had been made through the Protecting Power, the ICRC nevertheless called the attention of the British authorities to these cases.

Iraq. — May 1941 : The Iraqi Red Crescent protested against the bombing of medical units and ambulances by British aircraft.

U.S.S.R. — June 1942 : The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies protested against the bombing by German aircraft of military hospitals at Grodno, Lida, Minsk and Smolensk, and of a hospital-train and several medical units at Lvov.

Siam. — December 1943, and February 1944 : The Siamese Government lodged a protest against the bombing of military hospitals at Bangkok by United States aircraft.

Croatia. — April 1944 : The Croat Red Cross protested against the bombing of their medical establishments by Allied aircraft.

France. — August 1944 : The French Red Cross protested against the bombing by Allied aircraft of three of their ambulances conveying refugees, during operations following the landings in France.

Germany. — In 1940, Germany made use of rescue seaplanes, painted white and bearing the Red Cross emblem, to pick up German or enemy airmen from the sea. Several of these planes were shot down by the British and their crews taken prisoner. Following on a protest by the Germans, through both the Protecting Power and the ICRC, the British authorities declared that they did not consider these seaplanes as belonging to units of the medical service, in view of the fact that they could be used for reconnaissance purposes, and that cameras had been found on board. They also pointed out that Art. 18 of the Convention refers to the use of hospital planes only in connection with the wounded of the land forces.

(F). MARITIME WARFARE

It will be remembered that the principles of the Geneva Convention are applicable at sea, by virtue of the Xth Hague Convention 1907 for the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention.

In this field also the ICRC has pursued its studies with a view to the development of international law, and bringing it up to date. After the meetings of the Commission of International Experts which met in Geneva in 1937, the Committee had already prepared a very full draft of a revised Maritime Convention, and this was approved by the XVIth International Red Cross Conference. The draft was then placed on the agenda of the Diplomatic Conference which the Swiss Government intended to convene in 1940, but which was postponed owing to the war. At the close of the second World War, the Committee took up this draft once more, to complete it in the light of recent experience ; a revised draft of this Treaty will be submitted to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference. The policy adopted by the Committee in behalf of the persons protected by

the Xth Hague Convention has, in general, merged with the work of the 1929 Geneva Convention. The Maritime Convention however led to certain distinct steps.

The Committee was, on some occasions, called upon to express its views on the interpretation of these terms and their implementation. Further, the Committee took every useful opportunity to draw the attention of the Governments concerned to the measures recommended by the 1937 Experts, to improve and bring up to date the system of marking hospital ships. The Norwegian Government, for instance, was approached in this sense on the occasion of a protest received in Geneva in April 1940, relating to the bombardment of a hospital ship. It should be noted moreover, that the majority of Powers adopted the system of marking proposed in the 1937 Draft, which comprised the painting of large red crosses on the decks and superstructures.

The belligerents usually asked their Protecting Power to notify to the adverse party the names of the hospital ships they had commissioned. The Committee was however invited, in the spring of 1944, by the French Government in North Africa to notify the Axis Powers of the commissioning of the hospital ship "Canada".

In December 1943 the German Government sent in an urgent request for the Committee to inform the British and United States Governments of the presence of members of the German armed forces who had been shipwrecked and were drifting on a derelict ship in mid-Atlantic. The Committee at once communicated the position of the wreck to the Governments concerned, who replied that these indications had been passed on to their hospital ships, with instructions to attempt the rescue of the survivors.

The Committee was furthermore called upon to deal with a fairly large number of protests concerning the sinking of, or attack on hospital ships, and with disputes concerning the application of the Xth Hague Convention. In accordance with its usual procedure, the Committee forwarded any protests made by a National Red Cross Society to the Society of the country in question, with a request to approach its own government authorities and to reply. When protests were made by a Govern-

ment, they were forwarded to the enemy Government concerned. Thus, in January 1944, following a series of protests made by the Japanese Red Cross concerning the bombardment of several of their hospital ships, the Committee notified the American Red Cross of these complaints. It did not however make them the subject of a special communication to all National Societies, as the Japanese Red Cross had requested, as this course would not have been consistent with the practice usually followed in such matters. The Committee did nevertheless publish in the "Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge" a complete account of the protests relating to the various alleged violations of the Xth Hague Convention during the war in the Far East.

The Committee subsequently received comprehensive and detailed answers to these charges through the American Red Cross. These replies had been drawn up by the responsible Departments of the United States, but the Committee was not authorized to publish the text in the "Revue". The general substance of these replies was that the attacks on these hospital ships were due to faulty markings; aircraft pilots had been unable to recognize the ships soon enough, as they were lying between warships, or because their markings were invisible from the air, or were not illuminated at night. In some cases, close examination of the photographs, taken during the attack, with a lens was required to recognize the distinguishing markings. The United States Authorities suggested that the enemy should adopt adequate markings, which would prevent such incidents in future.

It should further be noted that certain belligerents refused to recognize hospital ships, on the plea that their tonnage was too low. The same comment was applied to life-boats and mooring-buoys which it was thought could be used for combatant purposes. Such cases were generally dealt with through the intermediary of the Protecting Powers ¹.

¹ With regard to the efforts made by the Committee for the protection of PW journeying by sea, see below. The formation of a Red Cross fleet for relief consignments has been dealt with in Vol. III, Part 2, of this Report.

PART III

PRISONERS OF WAR

I. General Remarks

In ancient times the concept of "prisoner of war" was unknown. Captives were the "chattels" of their victors who could kill them or reduce them to bondage. Throughout the ages, innumerable captives owed humane treatment no doubt to the mercy of their victors. It is a fact, too, that sovereigns or military commanders have been known to ordain that their armies deal humanely with the prisoners who fell into their hands. More than once, philosophical or religious doctrines checked the savagery which prisoners might have been led to expect. The French Revolution, inspired by the ideas of the Encyclopedists of the 18th century, actually decreed that "prisoners of war are under the safeguard of the Nation and the protection of the laws. Any unwarranted severity, insult, violence or murder committed against prisoners shall be punished according to the same laws and penalties as if such excesses had been committed against French citizens."¹ However, more than a century had to elapse, and the Hague Convention of 1899 (completed and made more explicit by that of 1907) to be reached, before the States were ready to limit their respective sovereign rights concerning the treatment of prisoners of war, and before prisoners were granted their own statute in international law, protecting them from arbitrary treatment by the detaining Power, and which may also be invoked by them against that Power².

¹ Decree of May 4 and June 20, 1792 (Art. I and II).

² Cf. Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, Art. 4 to 20.

The Red Cross could not remain indifferent to the plight of prisoners of war. At the outset, Henry Dunant, with remarkable foresight, proposed to frame rules for their treatment in the Convention which he had in mind. His colleagues in the small Committee which was to become the future ICRC, being prudent men, set aside this suggestion, since they feared by attempting too much, to jeopardise their primary plan. The difficulties encountered in drawing up the Convention of 1864 relating to the sick and wounded, and the threat of a breakdown which hung over the negotiations to the end, proved that it was wise, in the initial stages, to narrow down objectives.

However, the idea was launched. The men who had recently succeeded in getting the sanction of international law for the principle that the combatant disarmed as a result of wounds or sickness, is simply a suffering human being in need of help, now turned to the prisoner of war. By 1870, the ICRC had occasion to prove this: one of the staff of their Agency for sick and wounded of both armies at Basle had the idea of opening an information bureau on PW. Without placing this scheme under the emblem of the Red Cross—the use of which was still strictly limited—the ICRC approved the idea. The Committee continued to study the question and persuaded the Red Cross, in the international Conferences of 1902, 1907 and 1912, to agree to extend relief work to able-bodied prisoners. The Committee also offered to act as intermediary in this work, as it had done in behalf of the sick and wounded ¹.

Meanwhile the Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of 1907 determined the status of the prisoner of war. These Regulations were a landmark of substantial progress. But already in the first World War of 1914-1918, their provisions proved too indefinite, and the belligerents were compelled to sign temporary agreements amongst themselves on the disputed points. The ICRC did its best to prove by practical measures the interest shown by the Red Cross in PW. As it had already done in 1870 and 1912, on its own initiative, it opened an

¹ Resolutions I of the Conference of 1907, and IV of the Conference of 1912. Cf. also: Records of the International Conference of Washington, 1912, pp. 132-138.

International Prisoners of War Agency which, with its seven million nominal cards, quickly made its name known throughout the world. The Committee served as intermediary in relief shipments. It also broke new ground, sending delegates to the camps not only to bring the comfort of a friendly visit to the PW, but to make impartial investigations on the treatment they were receiving and to persuade the Powers to apply the improvements which, in its view, were called for by the tenets of the Red Cross.

When the war was over, the Red Cross did not "demobilize". In the practical field, it took an active part in repatriating PW; of special note was its work for those from the Russo-German front—a difficult problem made more acute on account of geographical, political and material circumstances. In the theoretical field, the ICRC lost no time in seeking to profit by the experience gained during the war, in the course of its efforts to improve the conditions of PW, by giving them a regular statute. The initiatives taken by the Committee and the range of its achievements had endowed it with such authority in these matters, that the representatives of the Governments and of Red Cross Societies who took part in the Tenth International Conference in 1921, unanimously approved the principles submitted to them by the Committee as the basis of a new Convention. They invited the ICRC to draw up at once a draft code on the lines of these principles. In turn, the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 adopted this draft, and the "Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War", sometimes known as the "Prisoners of War Code", thus came into being.

This historic Convention is especially important because it establishes a PW as a juridical person with his own statute, and because it is an instrument which lays upon the Detaining Power considerably more obligations towards its captive, than it requires from the captive towards the captor. The Convention is also remarkable because the intervention of a private organization, the ICRC, is expressly recognized in this inter-governmental treaty. Article 79 entitles the Committee to propose to the Powers the institution of a Central Information Agency.

The same Article adds that " these provisions shall not be interpreted as restricting the humanitarian work of the International Red Cross Committee ", and this provision is again embodied in Article 88 thus : " The foregoing provisions do not constitute any obstacle to the humanitarian work which the International Red Cross Committee may perform for the protection of prisoners of war, with the consent of the belligerents concerned."

In contrast to former situations, intervention by the ICRC in behalf of PW has rested upon a legal foundation since the Convention of 1929. What is the value of this foundation ? It is not an obligation, for the ICRC is not given an official mandate. In fact, in the matter of the Information Agency, all that is asked of the Committee is to " propose " its organisation, if it considers it necessary. As for the rest, nothing is defined. The legal basis in question comes down to the mere confirmation of the *de facto* position which the ICRC had gradually acquired in the course of previous conflicts. Formerly, the Committee had taken initiatives ; now it was entitled to take them. This counts for little, and at the same time for much. It is of little account, because there is always the reservation of approval by the belligerents. The Convention gives the Committee no means of insisting that its interventions be sanctioned or of carrying them out. It is of great account, because even should the belligerents finally refuse all the Committee's proposals and action, the ICRC has the right to discuss with the contracting Powers, almost as an equal, all matters touching the treatment of prisoners of war.

It is on this right of initiative that the Committee based its entire work for PW during the second World War, responding to the promptings of circumstances and carrying out its duties to the extent of the means in its hands. This work may be divided into three main chapters : (1) The Central Information Agency ; (2) the forwarding of relief supplies ; and (3) the general activities for the improvement of conditions for PW, as well as specific measures which do not fall under the first two heads.

The Central Prisoners of War Agency. — This Agency was the main object of the efforts of the Committee even before the

outbreak of war. The Committee did not wait until events should justify the creation of the Agency according to the terms of Art. 79 of the Convention, or indicate the neutral country in which it should be opened, and of the pattern which it should follow. The ICRC set up a framework and general structure which could be speedily developed in case of need, and thus, from the first days of the conflict, it was able to "propose" to the Powers at war, not the organization of an Agency, but the services of a body which was ready to function at any moment.

Even if the Agency had been confined to the rather technical rôle assigned to it by the Convention, it would still have had to be an undertaking on a vast scale. The multitude of PW—taken sometimes by hundreds of thousands at one time—together with the increasing number of belligerents and the corresponding reduction in means of communication, all raised problems which seemed insoluble. The ICRC, nevertheless, extended the original framework of the Agency. Out of a mere bureau, which was to serve as an intermediary between other offices, its hundreds and finally thousands of staff members made of it a living organism, which was not content to await information, but often went out to seek it. Thus, the Agency restored the direct link between PW and their next of kin, and even between millions of civilians who were separated by the combat zone.

The problems which the Agency had to solve were so complex, its services so varied and its work so vast, that a whole volume of this Report has had to be devoted to its activities ¹.

Relief. — During the first World War of 1914-1918, the ICRC had but little opportunity to implement the resolutions of the Conferences of 1907 and 1912 ². It was possible then to forward the greater part of the foodstuffs for PW by post. It might have been assumed that the same conditions would prevail in the War of 1939-1945. The Convention of 1929, which was concluded meanwhile, lays down the right for PW to receive parcels by post. Moreover, by putting PW in respect of rations

¹ See Vol. II.

² See above, p. 217

on the same footing as "depot troops" of the detaining Power, and by laying upon that Power the obligation to supply clothing and medical care, the Convention in principle assures the basic requirements of PW.

In reality, the facts were otherwise. The immense number of PW, the inability of some Detaining Powers, sometimes also their faltering determination to apply the stipulations of the Convention, the chaos created by air-bombing and other factors, created vast requirements. Often, that which in the minds of the authors of the Convention was to serve as occasional relief, or as a supplement to the regular diet, became for millions of PW the main and permanent part of their subsistence. Further, war conditions led almost all donor organizations, State or private, to turn to the ICRC, at the same time that the obstacles mounted up in its path. Therefore, of all the work done by the ICRC in the recent War in behalf of PW, the forwarding of relief supplies is the one which increased most in scale, when compared with the work accomplished in 1914-1918. So great was its development that, as in the instance of the Central Agency, a special volume must be given to it in this Report ¹.

Improvement of Treatment of Prisoners of War. — In addition to these two activities, the Central Agency and the shipment of relief supplies, which are more or less foreseen and clearly defined, the ICRC had a right to undertake other work which was not defined in any Convention. Under this heading come all the enterprises which the Committee felt itself bound to take in hand for the welfare of PW, and in general its endeavours to secure application of humanitarian principles, of which the Red Cross is the champion, to members of forces whom captivity has placed *hors de combat*.

The national Red Cross Societies could foresee, in theory, work of this kind when they organized relief committees for PW in 1914. Sometimes they actually put it into practice. Nothing could be more in keeping with the Red Cross ideal than the concern of national Societies with the welfare of PW detained in their

¹ See Vol. III.

own territory, and their intervention with their own Governments in order to secure for these captives treatment in accordance with humane standards. It must, however, be admitted that already in 1914-1918, but more especially, and in a very general way during the recent War, this duty was left almost entirely to the ICRC. Its essentially neutral character, and the authority it gained during previous wars placed it in an especially advantageous position to carry out such a task.

Acting on a policy which was different from that in the case of the Agency, the Committee did not at once propose to the belligerent Powers on the outbreak of war, that it should undertake this general programme. There was the Convention, and there was no reason to suppose *a priori* that it would prove inadequate, or would be inadequately applied. There was, too, no way of estimating future requirements. Therefore, the Committee took on these tasks by degrees, and sent, at first, special missions and then appointed permanent delegates to visit PW camps.

The chief method for carrying out these duties is by camp visits and the ICRC made wide use of it ¹. Visits have the advantage over other methods by the direct influence they exercise on treatment of PW: some infringements of the elementary laws of humanity are too grave for a State, even though it has little concern for the respect of such laws, to dare expose before the eyes of neutral witnesses. What is now known of the distressing conditions of captives whom neither the representatives of the ICRC nor of the Protecting Power were permitted to visit, because the Detaining Power took the view, rightly or wrongly, that the Convention of 1929 was not applicable to the *ir* case, is proof *a contrario* of this fact. Further, it is only by camp visits that the Committee is able to check the information received by it from various sources, and to judge the particular conditions in a given camp, or in a general way to form an opinion on the manner in which a Power is applying the treaty stipulations. The result of investigations made during such visits called for the use of a further method: interventions or negotiations with a

¹ See below, p. 228

view to improving the living conditions of the PW. These negotiations were undertaken according to the nature and urgency of the cases, either on the initiative of the delegates themselves, or on instructions from Geneva, or by the ICRC, who approached the Government of the detaining Power, or by any other appropriate channel.

It should finally be pointed out that reciprocity played an important part in the work of the ICRC in behalf of PW. It was not possible to ignore the importance of this factor in the eyes of the belligerent Powers, even though the humanitarian Conventions are in principle agreements to which no interests are attached. The ICRC advanced the argument of reciprocity, however, only when it could have a favourable influence on the welfare of PW, by securing for them, by analogy, the improvements which had been granted to prisoners by the adverse party. On the other hand, the Committee always endeavoured to forestall the suppression by a belligerent State of certain advantages which had already been agreed, or to stave off the refusal to grant such advantages that might lead to the withdrawal of similar privileges in the opposite camp. The ICRC believes that its interventions with one party should not be handicapped by the fact that it may encounter temporary, or even insuperable obstacles in dealing with the other party.

Camp visits, endeavours of the Committee to enforce respect of humanitarian principles, and the interplay of reciprocity, might presuppose that the ICRC exercises a positive "control" over the application of the Convention of 1929. From this supposition to the assumption that the ICRC is the "guardian", even the "guarantor" of the Convention, there is only a step and one that is too often taken. Although frequently used, even by the ICRC, for lack of a more adequate term, or for convenience sake, the term "control" is not quite fitting. Control presupposes sanctions. The ICRC has no means of constraining a State to apply the Convention correctly, still less of imposing a penalty. The only sanctions which it could wield would be the withdrawal of the benefits of its welfare activities in behalf of PW who are nationals of the recalcitrant State; such action, even in contemplation, is utterly barred on the

grounds of the very principles of the Red Cross. Moreover, the ICRC has no mandate to exercise any such control. Even more than in other fields, the ICRC acts here by its own motion. If it has often had the good fortune to be able to found some of its interventions on a specific treaty stipulation, it acted not as jurist, but on the humanitarian plane, and because in that particular instance, it was the only means of persuading the Protecting Power to grant PW, at least partially, what the plain tenets of humanity could exact of them even more definitely than legal instruments.

The States entrusted actual "control" not to the ICRC, but to the Protecting Powers, by their recognition under Article 86 that "guarantee of the regular application of the Convention will be found in the possibility of co-operation between the Protecting Powers charged with the protection of the interests of the belligerents", and by regulating the right of delegates of the Protecting Powers to visit camps. The question may then be asked, whether the work of the ICRC did not overlap with that of the Protecting Powers. This was not the case. Experience has proved that the respective activities are not contradictory, and that on the contrary they may even complete each other. Although they run parallel, they are exercised on different planes.

The Protecting Power is a mandatory of a State; it acts on directions received from that State and on its behalf. The ICRC is the agent of no one; it acts on its own initiative, and in complete independence. The work of the Protecting Power deals only with certain PW on the score of their nationality; it is first and foremost utilitarian and legal. The service of the ICRC is offered to all without distinction, irrespective of nationality; it is practical and humanitarian. Assistance to the victims of war is only one aspect of the part played by the Protecting Power. For the ICRC, it is the sum of its efforts. Last of all, where theory is concerned, the ICRC, in making its interventions in each of two adverse camps, is in a position to undertake multilateral action, whereas the Protecting Power has only a unilateral view of the situation. It was only as a result of exceptional circumstances, when one after another almost all the countries in the world entered the war, thus reducing the number

of neutral States who could serve as Protecting Powers, that countries like Switzerland and Sweden were charged with the interests of a large number of States belonging to the two enemy camps : that was not the case in former conflicts, nor for that matter in the beginning of the recent war. The collateral character of the work of these Powers and that of the ICRC for PW became so marked, that these respective activities seemed to be a duplication one of the other. However, as a rule, this did not raise any substantial difficulty, and apparent dualism was in the last resort all to the advantage of the people concerned.

Besides using their initiative in the field of what is known as the " control " of the application of the Convention, the ICRC endeavoured to complete the legal regulations covering the treatment of PW. Although the Convention of 1929 was clearly defined, its provisions, which had been drafted on the basis of the experience of the first World War, often proved ill-adapted to the realities of total warfare, inadequate or wholly silent on certain important points. These facts led to countless interventions by the ICRC, which will be referred more than once in this Report ¹.

The ICRC received many protests alleging grave violation of international law, but very few had any reference to PW ².

¹ See in particular above : Development of International Law, p. 189.

² The only notable cases are the following :

(a) In September 1944, a protest by the Italian Government concerning the execution by the German forces of the crew of an aircraft shot down over Albania. The German authorities replied that the investigation which they had undertaken had revealed nothing which might provide grounds for the Italian protest.

(b) In March 1945, a protest by the Rumanian Government against the execution by the German escort of four PW, whose extreme exhaustion did not allow them to follow the column. A few weeks later came the capitulation and the German Government ceased to exist ; the intervention of the ICRC in Berlin therefore remained unanswered.

(c) In December 1944, a protest by the Bulgarian Red Cross against the inhuman treatment and mutilations inflicted by the German troops on Bulgarian PW.

(d) In May 1945, a protest by the Belgian Government concerning the execution of Belgian PW by the German troops, by way of reprisal. These two latter protests reached Geneva too late for the ICRC to communicate them to Berlin. There were, by that time, no longer any German authorities.

These were submitted preferably to the Protecting Powers, whose part, assigned to them under the Convention of 1929, designated them specifically to receive such applications. It should be clearly understood that these "protests" came from Governments. On the other hand, the ICRC received thousands of complaints from authorities and organizations, the PW themselves or their next of kin, thus giving rise to constant negotiations by the Committee, with the object of having the reported shortcomings remedied. The following chapters will give an account of these.

Whereas in the course of the last century, the development of humanitarian principles had gradually brought about the acceptance of the rule that the broken or captive enemy was nothing but a suffering human being, it now seemed as though in the past few years, the whole of that ground had been lost. The unleashing of nationalist passions; the ideological and totalitarian character of warfare; the accumulation of hatreds born of immeasurable devastation and persecution; official theories advocating bondage, even the extinction of whole nationalities and races, regardless of the individual members of these groups; all these gave rise in many cases to a dangerous trend in regard to the PW—that of ignoring the suffering human being, and viewing him only as an enemy who was held personally responsible for the acts of his Government and of his fellow combatants. Given such an attitude, the degree of mistrust and hostility which met any intervention in behalf of the victims of war of enemy nationality could not fail to grow rapidly. It is, therefore, not an overstatement to say that the fact that the ICRG, in such conditions, could keep up its work and even extend its efforts for PW, has a significance at least as great as that of giving the impetus to this work in 1914.

* * *

As the Central Agency and the Relief Division are to be dealt with in separate volumes, the following chapters will deal in full with the other activities which have been mentioned. First, *Camp Visits* will be described, then the work of the ICRC in

relation to the *Treatment of PW*, taking successively the various aspects of the life of the prisoner as they are dealt with in the Convention. Other chapters will be devoted to the *Protection of prisoners against the dangers of war*, *Work, Relations of the prisoners with the Exterior*, *Judicial Proceedings*, *Repatriation* and *Reprisals*.

All the above concern the work of the ICRC in behalf of PW who were legally entitled to protection under the Convention of 1929. But the ICRC did not confine its care solely to this category of prisoners, members of the forces. In the view of the Committee, humanitarian principles stand for more than the Conventions, which are necessarily only a narrow expression of such principles. The Committee therefore endeavoured to have the protection of the Convention, or at all events the field of its own welfare work, extended in quarters where, in the absence of ratification, the Convention was not in force ; it also tried to cover categories of prisoners to whom the detaining Power denied or withdrew PW status. These endeavours of the ICRC, with its successes and failures, will be covered in the chapters on the *Conflicts in Eastern Europe*, the *War in the Far East* and *Prisoners whose protection under the Convention was in dispute*.

A special chapter will deal with a particular category, *Internees in neutral countries*, and with the measures which the ICRC was led by circumstances to take in their behalf.

II. Visits to Prisoner of War Camps

(A). INTRODUCTION

During the second World War, the ICRC arranged for a systematic scheme of visits by its delegates, to camps for PW and civilian internees. This work, which developed to an extent hitherto unknown, formed one of the essential features of its task, and according to much evidence that has been received, was of the very greatest benefit to the detainees.

The inspection of camps enabled the ICRC to know and to keep a check on the treatment of PW and the application of the terms of the Convention ; to give impartial and objective information to the Powers concerned ; to improve the conditions of PW by steps taken on the spot, or by intervention made from Geneva ; to realize their needs and direct measures of relief ; and finally, to verify the distribution of relief parcels.

This faculty for delegates of the ICRC to visit camps is not explicitly recognized by the Convention, which provides only for visits by representatives of the Protecting Power, and opportunities afforded to relief organizations admitted by the Governments. This right of visit, however, is the very basis of the Committee's activities in behalf of PW. The ICRC is the only agency which has the right to visit equally and simultaneously the PW camps in the territories of two Powers at war with one another : thus it can be certain of making a precise assessment by comparing the situation of PW in the camps on either side, and so substantiate its interventions in behalf of the detainees, based as these are on the principle of

reciprocity. Any measures for relief must begin by an inquiry into the needs of the men, and end by supervising the distribution. Moreover, the Committee's delegates can visit PW even in the absence of any Protecting Power—a circumstance which occurred several times during the recent war.

The Powers party to the 1929 Convention did not dispute the Committee's right to visit PW camps, and most of them granted its delegates the widest opportunities in this field¹. In the war in Eastern Europe, where the Convention was not applied, the efforts of the ICRC to visit PW on both sides failed almost completely. In Japan, a State which had agreed to apply the provisions of the Convention, *mutatis mutandis*, although not a party to the Convention, the ICRC and the Protecting Power also were only allowed to visit PW camps to a very limited extent. In principle, this permission was only granted for camps in Japanese territory, and not for the occupied countries. The Japanese authorities furthermore restricted the opportunities for action by the Committee's delegates, even in Japanese territory, by refusing their *agrément* for months or years, by limiting the duration of their visits, and by preventing them from talking to the PW representatives without witnesses. The reports drawn up by the delegates as a result of their visits were moreover subject to censorship, so that the authors did not have the possibility of free expression.

During the War of 1914-18, many rounds of visits had been organized. These were in general for missions starting from Geneva. The visits were carried out as a result of special agreements with the Governments concerned, and subject to reciprocity. When the Committee's delegates were authorized to visit PW in any given country, they were asked to prepare a programme of their journey. Furthermore, they were assigned a scheduled route from which they could not deviate ; sometimes the total number of PW that they would be allowed to visit was fixed beforehand.

¹ See however below the chapter entitled "Prisoners whose right to protection under the Convention was in dispute".

During the second World War, no limitation in principle was placed on the activities of the delegates in this field, and their work was thus considerably extended. It is true that before each round of visits, they were still obliged to submit a detailed programme to the authorities. They had to make repeated requests to visit certain PW or internee camps, to which for one reason or another the authorities wished to refuse them access. But on the whole, apart from the Eastern European and Far Eastern theatres of war, visits to PW and civilian internee camps were carried out to the Committee's satisfaction. Whereas, from 1914-1918, only 524 camps were visited, the delegates of the ICRC from 1939-1947 carried out over 11,000 visits.

(B.) THE VISIT

As a general rule, the delegate had to give notice of his visit to the authorities¹. It may be regretted that the principle of unexpected visits was not generally adopted, for it has advantages which have proved their value. The delegate is sure that no preparations have been made, and he carries away an accurate picture of life in the camp. An organized visit, on the other hand, does enable the delegate to meet the camp commandant or his deputies; he is expected by the spokesman or camp leader, by the medical officer and by the chaplain, who often have reports to submit, lists of PW without news from home, and requests of all kinds, which in large camps need several days' preparation; finally, it is proper that as many PW as possible should be present, and have notice of the delegate's visit, so that they may themselves submit their complaints to him. Thus, in spite of all, visits notified in advance continue to serve a most useful purpose. Even if temporary improvements have been hurriedly introduced for the occasion

¹ When the delegate was a member of the ICRC he got in touch with members of the Government or the Staff of the occupying Power, or even with heads of States.

of the delegate's visit, he can sometimes ask the men and the camp leader in private, whether these are not measures taken merely for the nonce. The delegate must, however, retain the right to carry out such visits as he chooses and to fix the date himself, as a guarantee that his right of visit will not be arbitrarily restricted. He can then go at once to a camp when incidents require his presence, or the visit is asked for by the camp leader.

The delegates visited camps as a rule in the company of the camp commandant or his representatives. They could thus make their comments immediately, or ask for necessary explanations, and have access to all premises—including of course the guard-rooms. The presence of the authorities could not hamper the delegate; he was always accompanied by the camp leader and, when visiting the infirmary, by a medical officer of the same nationality as the men. During his rounds, the delegate could talk to the prisoners and question them as to their state of health, their general conditions, and their wishes. Every PW was then able to speak privately to the delegate; those who had complaints to make or messages to send availed themselves of this opportunity. Furthermore, and this was one of the main features of his task, the delegate could talk privately to the camp leader and hear any applications or complaints he had to submit. In most camps, the delegate managed to take advantage of this right.

No limitation could be set to the duration of the visit. It varied, according to the strength of the camp, from a few hours to a few days. Nor might any restrictions be placed on the number of visits.

The delegate entering a camp was almost the only direct link between the inmates and the outer world¹. Needless to say how numerous his tasks were, apart from inspecting the camp and supervising the application of the Convention. The delegate often brought relief supplies with him or made arrangements for their arrival; he took note, in company with the camp leader

¹ Besides the regular visits of the representatives of the Protecting Power and of the ICRC, PW were visited by delegates of the Vatican, the YMCA and other institutions for spiritual or intellectual aid to PW, and with which the ICRC kept in touch.

and the medical officer, of requirements of all kinds : food, clothing, games, books, medicaments ; he received applications from prisoners, complaints on the score of their treatment, requests for repatriation and for admission to hospital ; special messages to be forwarded ¹, enquiries to be made, etc.

There was no uniform method for visiting camps ; circumstances differed in fact too widely. The strength of a camp ranged from a few dozen (agricultural labour detachments) to thirty, forty and even sixty thousand men in the large camps in Germany, South Africa or India, which were real towns, with streets, police, road maintenance and cleaning service, etc. The delegate had to form a definite opinion of all these features in the short time at his disposal. After getting information from the camp leader and the camp authorities, he made a careful inspection of the various buildings : sleeping quarters, cook-houses, mess halls, sick wards, rooms for games or recreation, latrines, washhouses, etc. He questioned any PW whom he met there : men who had remained in the dormitories for any reason, patients in the sick ward, and kitchen staff. He asked for the bills of fare, and checked the stock of foodstuffs and store of medicaments. He saw the men returning from work, inspected them to see how they were turned out and what was the state of their clothing and footwear. He had long talks with the chaplains of the different communities, with the camp leader and finally, with all PW who asked to be heard. All complaints were listened to and forwarded. The delegate took note of the names of men who had no news from their relatives, and of requests of all kinds submitted to him. He could thus carry away from his visits a complete picture : equipment of the camp, discipline, relations between the authorities and the men, etc. In so far as impartial evidence can give an accurate idea of real conditions, the ICRC, and therefore the Government of the country of origin, could rely on this single witness ², and

¹ The correspondence that the PW handed to the delegate was of course submitted by him to the camp censor.

² The same remark applies to visits carried out by the representatives of the Protecting Powers. The reports drawn up by them could, moreover, be usefully compared with those of the ICRC, by the country of origin.

treat rumours and information from unknown sources with great caution. In many cases, the accuracy and care of the delegates' reports helped to forestall collective reprisals, or to restrict their effect. A typical example of this was the incident of the handcuffed prisoners which, thanks to action taken by the delegates, did not assume the proportions that might have been feared.

In the course of his visit, and during his interview with the camp commandant, the delegate gave his comments. These direct talks smoothed out many difficulties. He submitted observations of a more general character (orders which the camp commandants were obliged to carry out) to the competent authorities (commandants of military districts, Ministry of War or Ministry of Foreign Affairs), either before or after drafting his report. In all cases, he informed the ICRC of the negotiations undertaken on the spot, or of their results, and reduced the number of cases where Geneva had to take official action.

To ensure as complete an examination as possible, and to make their reports alike in form, the delegates worked on a draft scheme given them by Geneva, and which was gradually perfected during the course of the war. Although this was only a general directive, which could be adapted according to circumstances and left the delegate great freedom of interpretation, it may be of interest to publish an example. It will show how varied were the questions that delegates had to clear up.

The report first gave the following data : Address (by number and postal address) ; name of the camp leader ; camp senior¹ ; medical officers ; chaplain ; capacity of the camp ; number of PW (by nationalities and camp subdivisions) ; date of opening ; date of last visit made.

Then came the report itself, divided as follows :

General description.

Situation. Outside danger areas ? Healthy district ? Type of accommodation (barracks, huts, tents ; state of premises).

¹ The senior in rank, himself a PW, was responsible for certain questions of internal discipline. In officers' camps he was the senior amongst the officers of the highest rank.

Quarters.

Dormitories ; extent to which occupied ; air space ; ventilation ; furniture ; bedding ; lighting by day and night ; heating ; fuel ; precautions against fire.

Food.

Equipment of cookhouses ; bills of fare ; number of meals ; daily rations ; special diets ; supervision by camp leader ; mess halls ; drinking water.

Clothing.

Outer clothing ; underclothing ; footwear ; replacement and repairs ; working overalls and shoes. Have the PW (NCOs and other ranks) been issued with sufficient linen, clothes and footwear by the Detaining Power (Art. 12) ? Have officers buying their own, got sufficient kit ? Have all PW got their kit and articles for personal use ? Have PW got their full outfit of uniform ?

Hygiene.

Washhouses ; showers ; soap ; laundry ; latrines ; delousing. Can PW have warm showers ? Can PW wash their linen ? Have they enough soap ?

Medical care and health.

Medical officers ; regular inspections ; sick wards ; conditions of admission of PW to sick ward and of their stay ; state of health of PW ; proportion of sick ; serious cases ; epidemics ; means of disinfection ; isolation. Has the camp got a sick ward and medical staff (Art. 14) ? How is the sick ward fitted up ? Is the medical treatment of sick satisfactory ? Are there regular inspections by medical officers and dentists (Art. 15) ? Number of sick ? Serious illnesses ; contagious diseases ; epidemics ; deficiency diseases (scurvy, pellagra). Any PW seriously wounded or sick who have applied, but have not been seen by the Mixed Medical Commission (Art. 68-70) ?

Deaths.

Number and causes of deaths. Notifications of death. Any recent deaths ? What were the causes ?

Medical Stores.

State of medical stores ; supplies ordered.

Dental Care.

Dentists ; regular inspections ; condition of teeth ; equipment ; supply of dentures.

Religious activities.

Priests ; ministers ; chaplains ; buildings or premises ; number of services ; respect of rights of chaplains. Any chaplains (Catholics, Protestants) or rabbis amongst the PW ? Are religious services held ? By PW chaplains or by others who come from outside the camp ? In what language are they held ?

Leisure and physical exercise.

Leisure hours ; library ; performances ; orchestra ; games ; wireless ; walks ; sports. Are games and walks organized (Art. 14-17) ? Enough open air space for gymnastics and sports ? Can PW stay out of doors as long as they like, or only at stated hours ? May officers go for walks unescorted ? What kind of undertaking must they give in such cases ? Have PW got reading matter (Art. 39) ? Do they receive enough books, and from whom ? Have they regular study classes ? Do they want games ? Can they play music ? Cinema ? Is there a wireless set ?

Employment.

Nature of work ; number of workers ; time-table ; day of rest ; working conditions ; work prohibited, unhealthy, dangerous ; work of officers and NCOs ; wages ; relations with civilian employers. Time-table for the day. How many roll-calls a day ?

May PW work (Art. 27) ? Are they insured ? Do such insurances cover sickness as well as accidents ? How many PW working ? Strength of labour detachments ? Are the laws of the country governing employment applied to PW who work ? How much do PW receive, apart from food and lodging ? How much is deducted for PW working in labour detachments for food and lodging (Art. 28-34) ? Are labour detachments inspected, and have they been found in order (Art. 33) ? Are the clauses of Art. 31 (prohibited work) and 32 (unhealthy work) duly observed ?

Money and Personal Effects.

Method of payment of wages and of pay ; withdrawal of money ; impounding of personal effects against receipt ; money sent to relatives.

Canteen.

Goods sold ; prices ; system of payment ; use made of profits. Canteen set up ? List of goods on sale ? Prices the same as those in local trade (Art. 12) ? Are the profits really used for PW welfare ? Any restrictions in the use of tobacco ? How do PW get their tobacco ?

Correspondence.

Capture cards ; letters and postcards sent ; restriction or delay of correspondence ; parcels ; PW without news from home. Were PW able to inform relatives of their capture eight days after their arrival in camp (Art. 8 and 36) ? How many letters and postcards (and of what length) may PW write home (Art. 36) ? Have they received money sent to them ? Parcels direct from their relatives ? How long do letters take to reach the PW (Art. 40) ? Are there still PW who have received nothing ? Can the camp leaders correspond freely with the military authorities and the Protecting Power (Art. 44) ?

Relief Supplies.

Have the PW received parcels of food, clothing, or tobacco from the Red Cross (ICRC or national Red Cross) ? How many ? Which are the welfare societies interested in the PW ?

Discipline.

Convention ; transmission of orders and regulations ; disciplinary punishments ; guard-room ; cells ; duration of sentences ; legal assistance ; escapes ; complaints ; wearing of badges of rank ; rights of officers. Is the text of the Convention posted up (Art. 84) ? In what language are orders given ? Have PW been subjected to disciplinary punishments ? For what reasons ? Were Articles 45 to 59 complied with on these occasions ? Any attempts to escape ? As regards camp discipline, has the obligation for PW to salute been observed ? Is the wearing of decorations and badges of rank permitted (Art. 18-19) ? Are the disciplinary regulations communicated to PW in their own language (Art. 20) ?

Complaints.

Are there any complaints ? Are justified complaints successful (Art. 31, 42, 86) ? Is there a complaint book ? Have PW reason to complain of the food ?

Interview with the camp leader.

Has the camp leader been questioned without witnesses ?

Interview with the camp commandant.

Has the camp commandant grounds to complain of the PW (Art. 18) ?

Sundry interviews.

Special cases ; forwarding of documents ; powers of attorney ; wills, etc. Does the camp commandant give facilities for the

forwarding of deeds, official papers, documents, powers of attorney, wills, and the authenticating of signatures?

General Remarks.

Proposals ; negotiations and steps taken.

For the purpose of sending reports by cable to Geneva, the ICRC had drawn up a questionnaire containing 96 items. The delegate wired his report in an abridged form, giving his reply or comments after the number of each item.

The reports were often illustrated by photographs taken during visits. These photographs were reproduced at Geneva and forwarded to the Governments concerned. They provided a useful supplement to the description of the lay-out of the camp. PW seen in the photographs, singly or in groups, were named by the delegate so that the pictures could be sent to the next of kin.

(C.) REPORTS ON VISITS

During the War of 1914-1918, reports were always published in pamphlet form and grouped in series ; they were therefore available to the public. In the recent War, an important alteration was made. It is true that the reports of the delegates were not regarded as confidential, but it seemed preferable, as a general rule, simply to forward them concurrently to the Governments concerned (Detaining Power and country of origin) ¹. This procedure is in substance quite different from that adopted by the Protecting Powers, who sent their reports only to the country of origin.

The Detaining State was thus made acquainted with any comments and criticisms of the delegate, at the same time as

¹ The ICRC published regularly extracts from reports on visits in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* for information. The publication of these extracts, four or five of which appeared monthly (the monthly average of visits during the war was over a hundred) aimed only at giving some general idea of the situation of PW everywhere, and of the work of the delegates in their behalf.

the country of origin. The Governments being in possession of these reports on visits, were always free to communicate them to agencies and persons applying for them, and even to publish them. The ICRC intended not to prejudice the decisions of the Governments, and referred to them all applicants who asked to have these reports.

The agencies clearly entitled to show interest in these reports were the National Red Cross Societies. Being in close touch with their Governments, they could obtain them direct. Certain Red Cross Societies had a permanent interest in receiving all reports on camp visits, and the ICRC increased the number of copies forwarded to their Government, with a request to forward the necessary number to the National Red Cross Society. As an exceptional measure, and to avoid delay in forwarding, the ICRC sometimes sent reports to certain agencies either direct or through their Consulates, with the approval of the Governments concerned.

Unless otherwise desired, the reports were sent in triplicate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The official language was French. Reports made out in another language were translated, even when it was that of the detaining country. It was essential that the text sent to the enemy country should be identical ; on the other hand, it was not as a rule possible to send it a text in the language of the country with which it was at war. An exception to this rule was made in forwarding such reports to Japan. In that country, the European language most commonly employed is English, and the Japanese authorities drew the attention of the ICRC to the fact that the censoring of reports (for in Japan these were censored) would be considerably quicker if they were written in English. As the countries holding Japanese PW or civilian internees were chiefly English-speaking and the ICRC itself had no objection to make, the reports on visits concerning Japan were forwarded in English.

An exception of a slightly different kind, but which also did the PW a service, was allowed, on the request of the German Government. Reports sent to that country in French were translated into German in Berlin by the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. Towards the end of the war, there was a shortage of staff in the Berlin offices, and the Ministry proposed to the ICRC to have the reports for Germany done at Geneva by a translator supplied by the German Consulate. Later on, the ICRC itself did part of the translations; the French text was however always attached to the translated version, identical with that forwarded to the adverse Power, and the only one which was authentic.

The reports written by the delegates after their visits passed as a matter of principle through Geneva. The Committee itself sent them to the Governments. It was important that the ICRC should be the first to be informed of the comments of its delegates, so that it might reply to requests for information made by a Government. It could thus provide for the concurrent despatch of the reports to the Governments concerned. The ICRC made itself responsible for the translation and multi-graphing (by roneo) of the reports, and saw that they were made out in a uniform manner. It thus gave the delegates greater independence, by making itself responsible for their observations and comments, and protecting them by its authority.

If they were to be of use, the reports must be up-to-date. Exceptions were made when the delegates were in distant countries, and forwarding through Geneva would have taken several months (in the case of Australia, for instance). The delegate nevertheless sent a report to Geneva, even from that country. As soon as his report had been examined, a cable acknowledgement was sent to the delegate, instructing him to hand the Australian Government a copy for preliminary information. The report was then dealt with at Geneva and an official text sent later to the two Powers concerned.

Reports were often forwarded by telegram when the country of origin of PW was at a great distance from Geneva. In that case too, the written report came later and was the only authentic copy.

As soon as the number of reports received at Geneva justified the step, the receipt of reports was entrusted to a section of the PW and Internees Division, which took the name of Report Section. Here the reports were received and registered,

translated and examined ; extracts were made and the final draft was roneoed and despatched.

The substance of the report was in no way changed and the wording kept as far as possible, for it was indispensable that the text should preserve its value as evidence. Reports drawn up in languages other than French were translated with the greatest care, and made uniform in structure and style. The delegates knew that their drafts were carefully revised at Geneva; by reason of the frequently difficult conditions in which they prepared them, the writers were less concerned to give them an acceptable form than to make them accurate and complete.

Immediate use was made of the valuable information supplied in the reports. The Report Section passed on to the Committee's departments those passages which concerned them : requests for relief supplies to the Relief Section ; applications for medical stores to the Pharmaceutical Section ; camp strengths to the Section dealing with camp statistics ; applications or complaints of a general kind to the responsible department. These extracts had all the necessary references and enabled Sections concerned to consult the complete drafts.

The roneoed reports were, as mentioned, forwarded to the Governments concerned. Each Government was thus certain of having before it the same text as that sent to the other Government.

It sometimes occurred that several nationalities were represented in one camp ; the camp however formed the subject of only one report. The countries of origin were, in principle acquainted with that part only of the report concerning their own nationals. It was then necessary to make a special report for each of these Powers, containing general observations and special comments concerning the nationality concerned ; the Detaining Power received the full report.

During the war, the principle of transmission to the Detaining Power was somewhat extended. When PW in the hands of a belligerent Power were held in the territory of an ally, reports on visits were sent concurrently to both Powers. Certain Governments moreover agreed that reports concerning the PW in their hands should be sent in full to the allied Governments who

had originally held these men. Thus, after the close of hostilities, the reports on visits to German PW in France (most of whom had been handed over to the French by the United States) were sent to the O.C. of U.S. Forces in Europe ¹.

Reports concerning PW belonging to the Free French Forces were sent to the Provisional French Government, at first in London and later on at Algiers. They were sent at the same time to the detaining authorities.

After the war, PW in Allied hands were visited several thousand times between May 1945 and June 1947.

The reports were as a rule sent to the Governments through the delegates. A covering letter was attached, drawing attention to the most important passages, the deficiencies noted and the complaints received. At the same time, the country of origin was informed that the attention of the detaining authorities had been called to the deficiencies noted by the delegate, and that steps were being taken, the result of which would be notified to the said country of origin. It was thus possible to prevent reports showing failure to implement the Convention from leading to measures of reprisal against PW.

The delegate was thus informed of the date of the handing in of the report, and of the observations made by Geneva. He was able to follow closely the progress of any steps taken and, according to their importance, to arrange to return to the camp concerned within a short time.

(D). PROGRESS OF VISITS

The first visits to camps were organized from the outbreak of war. On September 23, 1939, a delegation of the ICRC visited a Polish camp, Oflag X, at Itzehoe. On November 7, a fresh round of visits in Germany was undertaken, during which

¹ The handing over of PW by one Power to another is not provided for in the Convention. Nevertheless, the belligerents admitted that the capturing Power shared with the new Detaining Power joint responsibility for the treatment of these PW until their final release.

time a delegate in England visited the first PW camps for Germans. On November 25, the first visits in France were carried out. The principle of reciprocity was thus put into execution ; the first contacts made, so important for the future work of the delegates, had been satisfactory. It is true that the number of PW and civilian internees was still small. But there was no longer any objection in principle to be feared, and the freedom of action of the delegates was not in question.

The year 1940 saw a considerable extension of the war, and a parallel increase in the number of PW camps. In June 1940, Germany held close on two million prisoners. The problem then facing the ICRC was one of practical means. The visits to camps had to be expanded to a far wider radius than any hitherto considered.

The situation of French PW in Germany, who formed the great majority of the men captured at that time, was very exceptional. As a result of the signing of the armistice between France and Germany on June 21, 1940, these two countries no longer considered themselves to be in a state of war, which put an end to the duties of the Protecting Power¹. Nevertheless, the German Government did not dispute the right of the ICRC to visit French PW camps. The ICRC has always maintained that it is not the official close of hostilities which brings its work to an end, but rather (as seen in 1945 and the years following) that its activities can only cease with the circumstances that have demanded them.

In the meantime, during the last days before Marshal Pétain's request for an armistice (from June 17 to 27, 1940) a mission of the ICRC had visited camps of German PW and civilian internees, who had been removed to the South of France. Here also the circumstances were quite exceptional. These PW and internees were impatient to be released ; their release had, however, to be carried out in accordance with the terms of the

¹ The Vichy Government set up a standing commission known as " Scapini Mission ", to visit French PW camps. In a country torn by political strife, as France was during the war, the duties of a mission of this kind cannot be compared with that of the ICRC, which has the distinctive feature of its neutrality.

armistice. The presence of the delegates, at a time when discipline and order were no longer strictly respected, contributed towards improving the condition of these men during the last days of their captivity, and made it possible to inform the German Government that they had been properly treated by their French guards.

In Germany, as soon as the situation was stabilized, and the ICRC could weigh the task facing its delegation there, the strength of the latter was raised to four persons, then to eight, and in 1944 to sixteen delegates. Up to the armistice, these delegates carried out 2,729 visits. A certain number of restrictions had been imposed by the German authorities. Besides the obligation to submit a programme of visits and to be accompanied by representatives of the Supreme High Command, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had limited the number of visits to three per year for each camp. The reasons given were of a practical kind : the camps were already visited by the representatives of the Protecting Powers, or of the Scapini Mission in the case of the French, by representatives of the YMCA World Alliance and other relief organizations, and by German teams of inspection. The authorities thus wished to avoid an excessive number of visits. For its part, the delegation could hardly contemplate visiting the PW more often, in view of the number of camps and labour detachments (Kommandos) and the limited numbers of its members. It was even impossible to visit all the labour detachments, the number of which was very large and which sometimes only consisted of a few men.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs several times objected to the increase in the number of delegates, or delayed giving their approval to nominees, and this had a direct influence on the number of camp visits.

The criticism of the delegates, the text of the reports, and the conclusions of the covering letters did not always suit the camp commandants, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was a certain tension from time to time, which even made it necessary to recall a delegate in 1944. The offices of the Wilhelmstrasse tried to put pressure on the delegates by interpreting Art. 87 of the Convention in an extremely restrictive sense, and

by claiming to confine the right of intervention of the ICRC to the field of welfare. Such an interpretation would have seriously limited the activities of delegates in the camps in Germany. In any case, the delegates did not on that account cease to carry out comprehensive visits and to forward detailed reports, and eventually the German authorities did not, as they had given reason to fear, narrow the field of work of the delegates.

Mention should be made here of the so-called "transit" camps, both in Axis and Allied countries, where arrangements were usually rudimentary and living conditions not comparable with those in permanent camps. It occurred nevertheless that PW were kept in these camps for a very long time, sometimes for several months, without being able to get in touch with the outer world. Moreover, the fact that such camps existed was only reported very late by the detaining authorities, and the Committee's delegates were authorized to visit them only after long negotiations. Certain of these camps were indeed never visited at all ¹.

The end of the war in Europe, bringing about the unconditional surrender of Germany, involved a considerable increase in the work of the visiting delegates. Now, three million Germans were PW, and in a position comparable with that when the French were held in Germany—that is, deprived of a Protecting Power, and without the guarantees deriving from reciprocity.

In Great Britain and the United States there was no change in practice, and the living conditions of the PW remained about the same as they had been during the war. In France on the other hand, the presence of one and half million prisoners—(of whom a large number had previously been in American hands)—in a country devastated by war, short of housing, clothing, food and medical stores for its own population, naturally raised serious problems; these made necessary frequent steps by the delegation, whose strength was raised to 27 members. Instead of diminishing, the number of visits greatly increased; during 1946, in view of this increase (3,000 visits in

¹ The ICRC has devoted great attention to the problem of the transit camps in the Draft Revision of the 1929 PW Convention.

all for the year), the ICRC was obliged to cease the issue of detailed reports on all camp visits. In Great Britain and the United States, where the camps had long been known, and where the numbers were steadily diminishing, it was possible to consider the situation as stable and satisfactory. It therefore seemed sufficient, in order to ease the work at Geneva, to send in monthly summaries of the work of the visiting delegates. When a camp did not seem satisfactory, the full report was forwarded with the necessary comments.

On the Continent, the presence of the delegates continued to be necessary. Most of the camps had been newly established in very unsatisfactory conditions. In view of this situation, the delegates increased the number of their visits and reports. In accordance with an agreement between the French and the United States Governments, the reports were also sent to United States Authorities, so that they should be able in part to meet the requirements (for instance, in medical stores) of the PW whom they had transferred to France, and towards whom they still had a certain responsibility.

From 1946 onwards the delegates inspected the convoys of of German PW returning to their country. By reason of the length of the journey and the need of suitable food and lodging during that time, the convoys were treated in the same way as camps and regularly inspected by the delegates of the ICRC.

The number of reports on camp visits sent to Geneva and forwarded to the Powers concerned, amounted to 11,170 by June 30, 1947, representing about 40,000 pages.

It will be seen from these figures that the principle of camp visits by delegates of the Committee had, during the war, become established as a regular practice.

III. Treatment of Prisoners of War

(A). PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS

Art. 9 and 10 of the Convention cover location and installation of PW camps. The provisions of these two Articles, which concern hygiene in camps and protection of prisoners against bombardments, are discussed in separate chapters of the present Report. The following remarks will therefore merely bear on location and installation.

Location. — Art. 9 provides that prisoners “ may be interned in a town, fortress, or other place ” and adds “ they may also be interned in fenced camps ”. During the recent war, prisoners interned in such camps were usually lodged in huts, more or less well heated in winter ; failing huts, they sometimes had to live under canvas for months at a time. This occasionally happened in Great Britain. The damp and often cold climate of that country made internment under these conditions trying to the health. The Committee’s delegates did not fail to urge, each time they visited a camp under canvas, that huts should be built in place of the tents. The British authorities, holding that encampment under canvas was by way of a temporary measure, followed the delegates’ suggestions as often as possible. Wherever tents were retained flooring was installed. Waterproof ground-sheets and extra blankets were issued. In September, 1942, the Committee’s delegate noted that, in Camp No. 40, for Italian PW, each man had from four to five blankets.

Transfer of PW for detention in the colonies or in countries where they had to suffer a climate to which they were un-

accustomed did not provoke, during the recent World War, the same controversies between belligerents as during the first one. The principle laid down in Art. 9, Sec. 1 that PW should not be detained in districts which are unhealthy or whose climate is deleterious to them, was generally accepted by Detaining Powers, and on the whole they gave a favourable hearing to the many and persistent endeavours of the ICRC to have men removed to more suitable climates. The ICRC was also successful in its pleas that Colonial PW should be transferred to a milder climate than that of their preliminary internment. The Committee also secured that men detained at altitudes harmful to them should be transferred to healthier places.

The provision of Art. 9, Sec. 3, that belligerents shall avoid bringing together in the same camp PW of different races or nationalities, which was found necessary in the first War, was generally respected during the second. It did, however, frequently happen that PW of different races or nationalities were not placed in separate camps, but merely segregated in the same camps and assembled in different compounds. This practice was not contrary to the spirit of Sec. 3, and it raised no objections from the countries of origin.

Installation. — Art. 10 lays down that the choice and equipment of places of detention must ensure that the premises are free from damp, adequately heated and lighted and also that precautions are taken against the danger of fire.

Experience in the recent War showed that a great variety of buildings and quarters were put into service. A converted penitentiary, for example, proved a better lodging than many other buildings. The ICRC were obliged, however, to intervene to prevent use of ships for internment of PW.

It should be pointed out that very often, on arrival at the premises assigned for their detention, PW did not find accommodation and hygiene conditions corresponding to those specified in Art. 10. It was only by degrees, and often as a result of the intervention of supervisory agents and delegates of the ICRC that the strictly necessary improvements were made to these establishments. The length of time between the arrival of

PW and the satisfactory completion of their quarters depended on the resources of the Detaining Power, on the good-will of the commandants, and also on the prisoners' own ingenuity. On an average, three or four months were needed to instal a camp in conformity with the stipulations of the Convention. Unsatisfactory conditions did sometimes remain unchanged. In this connection mention must be made of the deplorable state of German PW camps in France at the beginning of 1945. The devastations this country had suffered, the lack of materials of all kinds (in particular of means of transport), prevented the authorities from organizing PW camps with due regard to the provisions of the Convention. In most camps, sanitary installations were very primitive and conditions of hygiene were bad ¹. After several months of work and thanks to the insistent efforts of delegates of the ICRC, from 1946 the conditions in these camps took a decided turn for the better.

Generally speaking, the total areas and minimum cubic air space in dormitories corresponded with the conditions laid down in the Convention. This was not always the case with bedding. The ICRC frequently stepped in to have the number of blankets issued to PW increased. This question, however, raised many difficulties owing to the absence of any exact ruling in the Convention.

(B). INTERNAL DISCIPLINE OF CAMPS — SPECIAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING OFFICERS AND PERSONS OF EQUIVALENT STATUS

I. Internal Discipline of Camps

The Convention lays down under this heading, in Chapter 5, Art. 18 to 20, a certain number of principles governing discipline in the camps, the direct authority under which prisoners shall be placed, external marks of respect to be observed and the wearing of badges of rank and decorations.

¹ See below p. 263, and in Vol. III, remarks on Relief Schemes, Part I, chapter 10.

Generally speaking, these provisions were applied in a satisfactory manner and complaints made to the ICRC on this subject were not many.

Art. 18, Sec. 1, lays down that camps shall be placed under the authority of an officer. Delegates sometimes had occasion to intervene when certain camps were placed under the authority of an NCO only, or when the camp commandant was not a national of the Detaining Power.

The stipulations covering external marks of respect and salutes required of PW (Art. 18, Sec. 2) varied in their interpretation by the belligerents, some of whom insisted on PW giving the form of salute used by the forces of the Detaining Power. In most cases PW refused to do this and kept to their own form of salute. Difficult situations arose, and the ICRC did its best to smooth matters by pointing out that Art. 18, requiring PW to salute officers of the Detaining Power, makes it clear that this salute shall be that laid down in the regulations of the forces to which PW belong. The National-Socialist and Fascist salutes, which for a time were prohibited by some of the Allied Powers, were finally admitted to be not solely political but also military, since they were expressly laid down in German and Italian army regulations.

Difficult situations also occurred owing to the fact that some officers of the Detaining Power occasionally refused to return the salutes of PW, which was considered by these men as both offensive and humiliating.

Art. 18, Sec. 3, lays down that PW officers shall be required to salute only officers of the Detaining Power who are senior or equal in rank to themselves. Certain belligerents insisted, however, that PW officers should salute officers of lower rank or even NCOs, when they were at the head of the camp or when they held high positions as camp officials. This gave rise to numerous dissensions, and the ICRC was repeatedly called upon to intervene.

Art. 19, which authorizes the wearing of badges of rank and decorations, does not seem to have been observed with all the strictness required, especially towards the close of the war. The ICRC had to intervene very often, in particular with the

German authorities, to prevent not only badges of rank and decorations, but even uniforms from being taken away from PW officers and NCOs. The Committee also took steps to ensure distinctions being made between officers of different rank, and secured that the regulations of the Detaining Power on this matter should be posted up in the camps.

Following on many complaints, the ICRC moreover took steps to secure that prisoners be authorized to wear their badges of rank and decorations on the garments issued by the Detaining Power to replace worn-out uniforms. The Committee likewise took steps to ensure that the wearing of badges other than those laid down in Art. 19, such as badges of nationality, should also be allowed.

The application of Art. 20, which provides that regulations, orders and announcements shall be communicated to PW in a language which they understand, raised no particular difficulties, except that sometimes PW officers in Germany complained to the ICRC that communications were made to them by privates, and that a fairly large number of camps did not have enough sufficiently qualified interpreters.

Generally speaking, the main infringements of discipline in camps were due to the differences in political opinion amongst PW themselves. In North Africa, India and the United States, political discussions in certain camps of German or Italian PW sometimes brought about incidents leading to bloodshed, and the delegates always tried to calm the tension by approaching the camp leaders and the PW themselves.

The ICRC also had to intervene to induce certain Detaining Powers to refrain from carrying on political propaganda amongst PW. This happened especially in the case of the German authorities amongst Allied PW, and of the British authorities amongst Italian PW in India.

2. Special Provisions concerning Officers and Persons of equivalent status

Art. 21 lays down that belligerents shall be required to inform each other of the titles and ranks in use in their armed forces, and that PW officers and persons of equivalent status shall be treated with the respect due to their rank and age.

The belligerents informed each other from the outbreak of war, although with some delay, of the nomenclature in use of ranks in their respective armed forces ; this was done through the intermediary of the ICRC and of the Protecting Powers. Germany transmitted her nomenclature to the ICRC in October 1939, Great Britain at the beginning of 1940, Italy in April 1941 and Japan in May 1942.

Some difficulties arose from the fact that certain ranks, although bearing the same term in each of the belligerent armies, did not occupy an equivalent place in the military order of these forces. This applied particularly in the case of certain NCOs, considered to be NCOs by some belligerents, whilst regarded by others as having the brevet rank of officer. The ICRC was more than once asked to take steps in the matter ; it invariably made every endeavour to secure that debatable cases should be settled in such a way as to benefit the person concerned.

PW were often promoted during their detention. Notice of promotion was communicated to the Detaining Power by the Protecting Power and, until May 1941, by the ICRC as well. After that date the ICRC, who had already forwarded a hundred or so of these notices, came to the conclusion that such transmissions did not really form part of its customary work and should be left to the diplomatic services. The only further steps taken by the Committee in this field were to induce certain Detaining States to recognize these promotions and the changes they might bring about in the position of the men concerned.

The ICRC also made efforts to enable officers and NCOs who had lost their identity papers showing their rank, to supply proof of their position, either by sending them duplicates, or by calling upon fellow officers to furnish evidence. The ICRC also approached the Detaining Powers to prevent them from depriving officers of their identity papers, as happened fairly often.

Art. 21, Sec. 2, lays down that officers and persons of equivalent status shall be treated with the respect due to their rank and age. The ICRC rarely had occasion to intervene in this connection, as the spirit of this stipulation was generally followed, except in Germany, where PW officers were sometimes treated with unnecessary harshness. The Committee was

thus called upon to obtain improvements in the condition of certain French, Belgian, Dutch, Polish, Yugoslav and Norwegian senior and high-ranking officers, who had been interned in German fortresses, and were exposed to harassing measures by their guards.

Art. 22, Sec. 1, stipulates that orderlies shall be detailed for the service of PW officers. The ICRC received a good many complaints, mainly from Germany, on the score that the number of these orderlies was inadequate, and that there were sometimes even none, which obliged officers, even those of the highest rank, to do all camp fatigues themselves. The ICRC took the necessary steps whenever called upon, and in a number of cases was able to secure the improvements required.

Art. 22, Sec. 2, lays down that officers shall arrange for their own maintenance, by means of the pay which is due to them. This provision was rarely applied, at least in European countries. Owing to many difficulties, mainly the rationing of foodstuffs and textiles, purchases could be carried out only by the camp managements. Thus, several States made arrangements which ensured reciprocity, to supply food rations, clothing and underwear free of charge to PW officers. In other cases, the Detaining Powers undertook the maintenance of officers and deducted the costs from their pay.

By these measures, the maintenance of officers differed very little from that of other ranks, and problems concerning the former were similar to those concerning the men. It therefore appears unnecessary to examine these questions more closely, and the reader is referred for details to the following chapter relating to the food and clothing of PW.

(C). FOOD AND CLOTHING OF PRISONERS OF WAR

1. Food

Article 11 of the Convention lays down that "the rations for prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depot troops". The justification of this clause

is, indeed, disputed in some quarters ; moreover control over its application was a problem, because in certain countries the idea of " depot troops " was unknown. On the other hand, it is not always in the interests of the PW themselves, when for instance, they are detained in a country where the standard of living is low.

In practice, the above clause was not strictly applied in countries where the economic conditions were fundamentally influenced by the war ; the rations given to PW were inevitably affected by the food situation in the country as a whole. In these circumstances, and in view of the failure of its legal interventions, the ICRC felt impelled to request in all quarters that there should be a general improvement in the supply of food to PW, adequate for the maintenance of good health, quite independently of equivalence with the rations of " depot troops ".

Germany. — At the beginning of the war, the responsible authorities gave the ICRC an assurance that the prisoners received the same rations as " reserve troops ", adding that these were equivalent to those of the civilian population. In the spring of 1942, the Supreme Army Command expressed the view that rations for PW should be the same as for the German civilian population. In practice, the rations allotted to PW in Germany were less than those given to the civilian population ; in many cases, they received neither the basic rations, nor the supplementary rations granted to civilians. Complaints from PW on this score continued to arrive at Geneva in the autumn of 1940, and from that time, the delegation of the ICRC in Berlin was carrying on almost continuous negotiations with the responsible German authorities, when they pressed without respite for an increase of PW rations.

On several occasions, the Supreme Army Command gave orders for the reduction of PW rations, in line with the restrictions imposed on the German population. These measures, which made food conditions for the PW considerably worse, roused the delegates of the ICRC to fresh efforts ; their results nevertheless were unsatisfactory.

In these circumstances, the ICRC, in agreement with the competent organizations in the countries of origin of the PW could only increase the despatch of relief supplies to the camps ; already in the summer of 1942 the Committee's delegates were able to note, when visiting the camps, that for certain groups of PW, provisions received from their country of origin constituted 60 per cent of their total food supply. It should be stressed that the German authorities made these increasing consignments a pretext for gradually reducing the basic PW ration, in spite of the insistent representations made by the delegates of the ICRC.

On the other hand, the ICRC managed to arrange that, contrary to a practice which was tending to spread through the camps, the food contained in collective relief supply consignments should not be counted as part of the daily allowance, unless it was a case of preventing perishable foodstuffs from rotting. Furthermore, the ICRC obtained additional rations for PW who were seriously wounded or ill, particularly cases of tuberculosis.

With the worsening of the general situation in Germany, the rations of PW steadily deteriorated. Thus, in February 1945, the basic ration had fallen to an average of 1,350 calories per head. In view of this serious state of affairs, the ICRC took urgent and exceptional steps, in spite of the total disorganization of the ordinary means of transport, to ensure food supplies for prisoners by means of " block-trains " and mobile columns of motor trucks.

France. — The food supply to PW was affected by the economic state of the country, which was generally serious after the liberation. The official regulations, according to which PW compelled to work were to have the same ration as French workers, could generally not be applied.

In August 1945, the position had become so critical, that in the opinion of the Committee's delegates the health and even the life of 300,000 prisoners were seriously threatened as the result of under-feeding. To avoid an imminent catastrophe, the Committee's delegation in Paris made urgent appeals to the

American authorities in France for help. This was given at once with the result that the caloric content of the rations rose from 1400 to 2000, and the crisis was averted¹.

Another depression in the economic situation occurred in the spring of 1946, and complaints from PW were once more received in great numbers at Geneva. Throughout the summer of 1946, the Committee's delegates made increasingly urgent appeals to the French authorities, and continually travelled the length and breadth of France in order to visit the camps from which the complaints came. Thanks to their supervision and their co-operation with the French authorities, in the autumn of 1946 the conditions began to improve. The allowance for food allotted to PW was successively raised from 20 to 28 French francs, then to 35 and even to 50 francs in the case of PW in hospital. Improvements in rations were ordered everywhere, so that in the spring of 1947, after a winter during which the delegates exercised constant supervision, the situation could be regarded as normal.

The delegates also did equally effective work in North Africa, where the food supply to PW was also very uncertain. As a result of their efforts, the bread ration of the PW was made equal to that of the "depot troops", and the food was considerably improved in the camps where it was most unsatisfactory, particularly in those of Djelfa, Constantine (Algeria), and Zaghouan (Tunisia). At their request too, the French authorities improved the water supply of the camp of Selmane II (Algeria), and transferred the camp of Bou-Arfa, which was situated in the desert to a more habitable place. Lastly, the activities of the delegates resulted in a general increase in the amount of the daily rations, which rose from 1400 and 2000, to 2000 and 2300 calories.

Italy. — The authorities were approached on several occasions on this subject by the ICRC and always gave an assurance that the PW had the same rations as Italian "depot troops". Although certain British PW, thanks to consignments sent by

¹ See Vol. III, Part I, chap. 10.

the British Red Cross, sometimes received more food than they could eat, others complained about their rations. To clear up this situation, the ICRC instructed its delegation, when visiting the camps, to pay particular attention to the matter of food. During these visits, with only one exception, the delegation received no complaints as to the feeding of the camps and found no symptoms of under-feeding among British PW. The complaints sent to Geneva, mainly through the Red Cross Societies of the British Commonwealth, were due to the fact that the rations of the Italian forces were not so abundant as those to which British forces were accustomed and, above all, that they did not suit their taste.

The Greek and Yugoslav PW had the same rations as the British, with the exception of cigarettes, the issue of which had been settled by an agreement concluded between the British and Italian Governments.

Great Britain. — The rations issued to prisoners, although slightly less than those of the “depot troops”, were generously reckoned; in fact, they varied between 3300 and 3400 calories. Throughout the war, no complaint from PW came direct to Geneva with regard to this question. It is true that the Italian authorities forwarded certain complaints, but enquiry showed them to be unfounded. Nevertheless, when visiting camps, the Committee delegates had to take steps in a few individual cases to improve the diet, e.g. in General Hospital No. 99, where PW suffering from tuberculosis lacked the diet their state of health required.

On the other hand, after the end of the war, the supply of food to the PW was considerably reduced, not only in Great Britain, but also in the British overseas territories. This was consequent upon the restrictions imposed on the civilian population. The rations were reduced to 2000 calories for PW who were not obliged to work, and to 2800 for workers.

The situation became worse during the winter of 1946-1947, and many complaints came to the notice of the ICRC. The supervisory visits which were carried out established the fact that the rations granted to workers were generally sufficient,

but that those for PW not obliged to work had led to serious losses in weight.

India. — The delegates noted, during their visits to PW camps in the winter 1945-1946, that the rations given to Italian PW had been reduced in the South, and that only PW classified as "co-operators" received amounts equivalent to those of the British "depot troops". This gave rise to a number of complaints from the men who did not receive this preferential treatment. The negotiations which the ICRC immediately set on foot in London succeeded without difficulty in ensuring that all PW received rations equal to those of the British forces.

United States. — Up to the end of the war, the PW received the same ration as the "depot troops".

The Committee's delegates were compelled to take action in respect of rations of PW in other countries, particularly in Japan, as will be seen in the chapter concerning activities in that country.

2. Clothing

Art. 12, Sec. 1 of the Convention, which deals with the question of clothing reads as follows :

Clothing, underwear and footwear shall be supplied to prisoners of war by the detaining Power. The regular replacement and repair of such articles shall be assured. Workers shall also receive a working kit wherever the nature of the work requires it.

As in the case of food, countries whose economic conditions were considerably impaired by the war could not make adequate provision of the clothing of the prisoners in their hands. The Powers to which these PW belonged thereupon sent large quantities of uniforms to the camps through the ICRC¹. The object was not only to ensure that PW should have enough clothing, but also to give them uniforms of their national forces, which in any case could not be supplied by the detaining Power. By doing so, the Powers concerned did not intend to release the

¹ See Vol. III, Part I, chapter 2.

captor State, even partially, from their obligations under the Convention in respect of PW clothing. They made it quite clear that, in their view, the uniforms sent should be regarded as a supplement, and not be included in the issues which the captor State was expected to make.

Germany. — The above principle was accepted and applied, to a great extent, by the detaining Powers, with the exception of Germany. The German authorities considered that, in view of the conditions created by "total war" and the destruction by air bombing of large stocks of clothing, they were entitled to reckon the clothing from the collective Red Cross consignments in their regular issues. This policy meant, in practice, that the PW in Germany were in most cases unable to obtain the clothes sent with the collective consignments from their home country, unless they handed in those which they were already wearing. The camp commandants also frequently laid down the same conditions for the issue to PW of clothing from individual consignments. The German authorities had yet another reason to allow prisoners one single suit of clothes, namely their anxiety to reduce the possibility of escape to a minimum.

This procedure, of course, led to countless complaints, and during the whole war it made difficulties for the ICRC and its delegates. In spite of all its efforts, the ICRC was never able to obtain full recognition of the right to consider clothing from relief consignments as supplementary to the issue due to the PW. The delegates, however, managed to arrange that a double set of underclothing could be claimed by each man.

Although the issue of working clothes falls within the responsibility of employers, the delegates in Germany noted that this obligation was only rarely honoured. They had often to urge camp commandants to put pressure on the employers to this effect. In spite of the assurance given by the commandants, this question was not generally solved in a satisfactory manner.

The supply of footwear also raised serious difficulties. An order from the Supreme High Command in April 1942 laid down that leather shoes should only be left in the possession of those PW

who absolutely needed them for their work, and that other prisoners should only have wooden clogs. The delegates of the ICRC often noted that even men employed on dangerous work only had clogs, and frequently arranged for them to have leather footwear. In East Prussia, the delegates noticed that in many camps the PW went bare-foot, while large quantities of shoes were in stock in the camp stores. It should be added that, at the time the leather shoes were being withdrawn, the camp commandants continued to apply for consignments of similar footwear. These facts led the ICRC, in August 1942, to draw the attention of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the contradiction between this withdrawal and such requisitions; nevertheless, it only received an evasive reply. Later, the German authorities did, however, adopt a more liberal attitude, and in the spring of 1944 they gave an assurance to the ICRC that the consignments of leather footwear would be issued to PW as widely as possible.

France. — Problems of principle of this kind did not beset all the detaining States, but other material difficulties arose, particularly in France, after the liberation. The French authorities issued to PW a large part of the German uniforms which they had seized after the retreat of the German forces. Thus, as far as clothing was concerned, these men seemed to have fared tolerably at least during the first half of the year 1945, although the amount of clothing remained insufficient. Complaints were, however, received from PW that their clothing was inadequate, particularly as, in the course of searches, their extra garments were taken from them. These complaints had already led the delegates to intervene in their behalf.

In the autumn of 1945, this precarious situation became more critical, and as clothing was quickly worn out, it became really alarming in certain districts. Shortage of underclothing and footwear was first felt. Soon, the delegates were compelled to report to Geneva the wretched state of clothing of the PW, which was getting worse, since the Detaining Power was unable to replace worn-out garments. At the same time, the number of protests from PW against searches grew steadily and called for

several interventions from delegates. In January 1946, the situation was so serious that the commandant of a camp addressed a visiting delegate of the ICRC as follows: "You have saved the prisoners from starvation; don't let them die of cold."

In the absence of any Government or German Red Cross, which would have naturally been responsible for this task, it fell to the ICRC, jointly with the Detaining Power, to assist these men. Immediate and extensive measures for relief were set on foot and the results were very encouraging¹. Thereafter, the camp visitors noticed that the clothing of PW, while still inadequate, had often much improved. This improvement has continued from that time onward.

The clothing of German and Italian PW in *North Africa* was always a very sore point; the delegation in Algiers took a serious view of the question and gave it close attention. As a result, clothing was issued in many camps where the shortage was particularly acute. Furthermore, the ICRC endeavoured, through its delegations in North and South America, to collect clothing for the Italian PW in North Africa. Despite these efforts, the clothing situation in that country still remained precarious.

Great Britain and Canada. — Here, the ICRC and its delegates concentrated on facilitating the consignment of clothing from the German Red Cross. In February 1940, German PW in Great Britain expressed the desire to receive uniforms from Germany. In Canada, German PW who seemed to have readily accepted the underclothing and footwear supplied by the Detaining Power, expressed the same desire and were reluctant to wear the standard uniforms and garments issued to them. The ICRC offered its services to the German authorities for the shipment of the necessary consignments; once that had been agreed, the ICRC acted during the whole war as an intermediary for consignments of clothing sent by the German Red Cross to the PW in these two countries, just as it did, to an even greater extent, in respect of shipments to PW in Germany.

¹ See Vol. III, Part 1, chap. 10.

In spite of these consignments of uniforms, it seems that the clothing situation for German and Italian PW in Great Britain remained rather unsatisfactory. Throughout the war, the delegates noted many complaints concerning inadequate clothing ; officers required to wear the uniforms of other ranks ; obligation to hand over the battle-dress for German uniforms ; impossibility for officers to obtain a uniform even if they offered to pay for it ; general shortage of underclothing and handkerchiefs, etc. To the criticism by the delegates, the British authorities invariably replied that the regulations no doubt required the supply of adequate clothing, but that owing to the textile shortage, issues had been cut down. In the spring of 1946, the delegates were however able to observe that as a result of their interventions, the clothing situation had greatly improved.

In *India*, as the delegates found when they visited PW camps during 1941 and 1942, conditions in respect of clothing were most inadequate. There were complaints from every side, with regard to shortage both of clothes and underclothing, and of footwear. The delegates were moved to intervene, but the situation did not improve to any degree till 1943 and 1944, after fresh issues had been made.

Italy. — The British PW in Camp No. 21, at the beginning of the winter, had only drill clothing, too thin for the cool season ; they made many complaints to the ICRC with regard to this inadequacy. Consignments from the British Red Cross remedied this situation. The delegate in Rome succeeded in several cases in putting a stop to the withdrawal of clothing by the Italian authorities. For instance, he persuaded the commandant of camp No. 78 not to impound pullovers because they were contrary to regulations, but to affix a distinctive sign. The delegates in other countries had also to take action in similar circumstances : in Germany, where on several occasions the authorities deprived British PW of clothing which was too civilian in appearance, and might therefore aid escape, and in Yugoslavia, where the German occupation authorities withdrew their uniforms from Yugoslav PW repatriated for reasons of health.

It should be made clear that clothing conditions of the prisoners were not everywhere so unsatisfactory. For instance, throughout the war, PW in Australia received regular issues of a greatcoat, two uniforms, and two sets of underclothing. Worn-out kit was replaced without difficulty. In the second half of 1946, some difficulties arose in this connection, leading to complaints. The delegates approached the Australian authorities and received assurances that steps would be taken to remedy a situation which was only temporary.

The above are a few cases of collective intervention, as examples ; we cannot go into the countless occasions in most countries where the delegates made application to the authorities in respect of clothing, and where they endeavoured, often successfully, to give assistance to individual PW.

(D). HYGIENE IN THE CAMPS

This problem, which is of vital importance for the physical and moral well-being of PW, is dealt with in the Convention under Arts. 13, 14 and 15. These give general indications and precise instructions to ensure a minimum level of hygiene in the camps.

1. Application of General Provisions

Art. 13 requires the Detaining Power to take elementary hygienic measures to ensure cleanliness and health in camps, and to prevent epidemics by providing conveniences which are maintained in a constant state of cleanliness, and a sufficient quantity of water for their bodily cleanliness, and by arranging that they should have physical exercise in the open air.

Delegates of the ICRC frequently drew the attention of camp commandants to the fact that sanitary conveniences were insufficient in number and often inaccessible to PW at night.

The Convention does not regulate the matter of laundering, which was generally done by PW themselves or by the medical orderlies. Sometimes, especially in the case of officers, this work

was done outside the camps for payment. The ICRC advised the setting up of communal laundries, but experience showed that the men often preferred washing their own linen.

The right to enjoy physical exercise in the open air often remained a dead letter owing to the fact that the men did not have sufficient space available to take such exercise. Moreover, the ICRC had often occasion to observe that too long a period of confinement was the cause, in some cases, of real mental and nervous maladies, as a result of "barbed-wire disease". This kind of psychosis was more frequent amongst those who never had a chance of getting away from the camp, as for example in the case of officers. This condition was improved, to a certain extent, by arranging for walks outside the perimeter.

Getting out into the open air and a certain amount of freedom of movement have a great influence on the morale of men undergoing prolonged captivity. The authorities tried to deal with individual cases, but were disinclined to adopt uniform and satisfactory regulations covering all camps. Thus, within the same country (Germany, Great Britain, India, Rhodesia, etc.) each camp had its own rules governing walks. This illogical state of affairs seems due to the fact that the right of authorizing walks rested with the camp commandants, who acted according to their personal views. They usually took two factors into account : (1) the mental condition and discipline of the PW, and (2) the opportunities for escape which these walks afforded.

Once authority had been given, walks took place either under escort or on parole ; their length and frequency varied. In Germany, medical personnel and chaplains could go for a walk of two hours and a half three times a week ; in certain camps in India, real expeditions took place of over twenty-four hours. In this matter as in others, the treatment as between various nationalities often differed very widely (e.g. very restricted freedom of movement for Serbian and Polish medical personnel in Germany, and for Italian PW in Southern India, etc.). The ICRC attached great importance to this problem, and intervened on many occasions to prevent PW from being completely confined to camp.

2. Medical Attention

Art. 14 lays down that an infirmary shall be provided in each camp and that the expenses of medical treatment and of temporary remedial apparatus shall be borne by the Detaining Power. It further provides for the issue of medical certificates, and for the maintenance, where necessary, in the camps of doctors and medical orderlies to care for their fellow-countrymen. Transfer of PW who are seriously ill to military or civil institutions qualified to treat them is also stipulated.

During the last war, belligerents as a rule made genuine attempts to provide the necessary care for sick PW. Not only were camp infirmaries provided, in pursuance of Art. 14, Sec. 1, but hospitals for PW were very often set up in the neighbourhood of the principal camps. Shortage of equipment, premises and qualified personnel obviously did not always allow PW to have the care guaranteed by the Convention.

Another point is that the great scarcity of manual labour often induced the commandants of labour detachments to limit the number of PW excused from work on account of sickness. The Convention does not, it is true, stipulate that every PW shall be free to present himself for medical inspection whenever he chooses. The percentage of men admitted was generally low (one to five per cent) ; these examinations instead of being daily, were sometimes held at several days' interval.

Labour detachments often had no infirmary, and sick PW. had long trips to make to the infirmary at the main camp. Many cases could therefore not be given treatment in time, and suffered serious consequences.

The ICRC took frequent steps to improve this state of affairs, although such cases were not explicitly provided for in the Convention.

The Detaining Powers as a rule felt bound to supply PW with temporary remedial apparatus, although this was merely in accordance with the spirit of the Convention, and not consequent upon Art. 14, Sec. 2, which stipulates only the obligation of these Powers to bear the cost. In practice, however, the belligerents met with serious difficulties, such as shortage of

materials, and above all lack of mechanics, since most of these were serving in the forces. In consequence, the Powers very often turned to the ICRC, which did its best to provide the necessary material and personnel. Orders were placed in neutral countries, and qualified men were sent to the camps ¹.

The Convention speaks of temporary remedial apparatus only, since it is implied (Art. 68) that the fitting of permanent artificial aids will be done in the home country. Transport and other difficulties often prevented repatriation, and as captivity was prolonged, temporary aids became inadequate and even harmful to the rehabilitation of wounded PW, especially of amputees. The ICRC sought to supply PW with permanent and jointed apparatus, in co-operation with the countries of origin, which had to bear the cost. These attempts encountered many obstacles.

Dental plates were in many cases supplied to PW only in extremely inadequate quantities; some regulations in fact only permitted the supply of dentures to PW who had lost at least fifteen teeth during captivity and were suffering from gastric disease due to insufficient mastication. The ICRC took up such cases and saw to the supply of dental plates.

The Committee also drew the attention of the Detaining Power to prisoners who had trouble with their eyesight, and sent numerous consignments of spectacles.

In view of the great number of complaints about the inadequacy of dental care, surgical nursing and ophthalmic treatment, the ICRC arranged for the supply of equipment to the special wards in the camps, the equitable allocation of dentists and, where there was no Protecting Power, the despatch of supplies to PW who were technically expert.

The issue of medical certificates to PW who made application, calls for no particular comment, although the application of Sec. 3 was often defective.

The maintenance in the camps of doctors and medical orderlies for the care of their fellow-countrymen is dealt with in Part II of this volume (see above, p. 194).

¹ See Vol. III, Part III, chapter 4.

The ICRC had frequent occasion to make representations, under Sec. 5, concerning PW suffering from a serious disease or whose condition called for surgical treatment. It was observed that men due for repatriation were assembled in camps for weeks previous to their departure: although their case sometimes required an immediate surgical operation, this was not carried out, on the pretext that the men were expecting repatriation from one day to another.

3. Medical Inspections

Art. 15 lays down that medical inspections of PW shall be arranged once a month, and specifies amongst other things the detection of contagious diseases.

The shortage of medical supplies and personnel often made it difficult to apply this Article; moreover, the length of captivity and in certain instances, the privations which the prisoners had to undergo made them more liable to contagious disease. This was particularly so in the case of tuberculosis.

The ICRC, in response to a French proposal, did their best to set up mobile units for the detection of tuberculosis.

It should however be noted that certain epidemics which broke out in PW camps, especially exanthematic typhus, were as a rule, quickly arrested. For this purpose fairly large quantities of vaccines were supplied by the ICRC.

4. Conditions of Health in the Camps

Only a brief outline will be given here of the principal measures of hygiene taken in various countries to ensure cleanliness and health in PW camps, and to prevent epidemics¹. As a general rule, conditions of health in camps steadily improved in proportion to the visits of delegates of the ICRC. On the whole, Detaining Powers made laudable efforts to apply the Convention in the field of hygiene, despite the air raids which in many cases seriously complicated their task.

¹ Details will be found in Vol. III, Part III, chap. 4.

Germany. — The principles laid down in the Convention relating to hygiene in the camps were in general conscientiously applied, notwithstanding the grave difficulties which arose during the last months of the war.

X-ray examinations and radioscopy was carried out in most PW camps. Both medical personnel and the majority of PW were vaccinated against exanthematic typhus, of which only a few cases occurred.

Rooms and even whole huts were set aside for delousing. Regular disinfection took place to eliminate vermin, fleas and bugs. Cases of malaria were few, but there was a great deal of furunculosis, and diseases such as tuberculosis, ulcers, gastritis, nephritis, etc., were common.

The infirmaries were well organized. In some camps they comprised both a hut for internal diseases and one for infectious cases.

The air raids had very serious consequences for the maintenance of hygiene in camps. Water pipes were frequently destroyed, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain the necessary standard of cleanliness and healthful conditions. The destruction of sleeping quarters and other premises forced the camp commandants to crowd the men into the remaining huts. If one adds to these conditions the overcrowding caused by the arrival of PW evacuated from camps too close to the fighting zone, it can be realized that the problem of hygiene became increasingly hard to solve during the last weeks of the war. It was at this period that the shortage of food became most acutely felt. In many camps, general loss of weight and increasingly marked physical exhaustion were observed.

Great Britain. — The responsible authorities as a general rule took all necessary measures to ensure good health in PW camps. Patients were properly nursed in camp infirmaries or in military infirmaries set aside for PW. Medical inspections took place regularly.

In 1941, the number of PW was small. Camps were well kept and the main task of the ICRC was the supply of artificial limbs.

In 1942, the delegates took steps with regard to a camp where the huts were damp and there was no electric light. In 1943, they took similar steps concerning an officers' camp which had no infirmary and where patients were nursed in the sleeping quarters.

At that time there were ten anti-V.D. centres for PW in Great Britain, where intravenous injections of arseno-benzene and intramuscular injections of bismuth were given. There were numerous VD cases amongst prisoners arriving from Africa. Malaria was treated with atebrene.

In 1944, the delegates interceded in the matter of a camp for German and Italian PW, where the infirmary was under canvas, the floor only cemented and where there was an almost complete lack of blankets.

Italy. — The stipulations of the Convention concerning hygiene in the PW camps were in most cases adhered to. In certain areas, the adequate supply of water raised difficulties of varying degree.

In 1941, there were mainly British, Greek and Yugoslav PW in Italy. Most of the camps were equipped with showers and centres for disinfection and delousing. The few epidemics of dysentery which occurred were usually due to the quality of the water from the wells ; these were often inadequate, water being available only for two or three hours a day.

In 1942, the many syphilitic cases, mainly Greeks, received excellent treatment free of charge. Suspected cases were usually X-rayed and tested for bacteria. The most frequent disease was furunculosis. Isolation quarters for cases of scabies were inadequate, although malaria patients were isolated. Clothing and bedding were disinfected regularly. From 1943 onwards, the delegates stated that conditions of health in the camps were generally satisfactory.

Australia. — No intervention by delegates of the ICRC was found necessary with regard to hygiene. Camps were set up in parts of the country where the climate was sometimes extreme, very hot in summer and severe in winter, but on the whole excellent. In many of the camps, dental clinics enabled PW

to be given very good treatment. In one camp, the crockery was even sterilized in large tubs of boiling water.

The authorities gave careful attention to conditions of cleanliness and health in camps ; the sanitary installations, kitchens and huts were inspected frequently, sometimes even daily.

Canada. — The authorities made arrangements to ensure healthy conditions in camps by means of sanitary installations which were satisfactory and adequate in number. Sick PW who required special nursing were treated in well-equipped military hospitals and were in all respects very well looked after.

In one camp (No. 133), PW complained of being lodged under canvas, with wooden flooring and mattresses. The commandant and the personnel had similar quarters. The Canadian authorities stated that their main reason for not providing huts for these prisoners was that many thousands of Canadian troops were living in similar conditions in summer, without suffering any ill effects. Later, after intervention by the Committee's delegates this camp was reorganized with great care down to the smallest details : everything worked well and in a regular manner.

India. — The authorities took the necessary measures to ensure health and cleanliness in camps despite the difficulties due to the geographical situation and climate. Both cholera and malaria had to be dealt with. The fairly large number of cases of syphilis amongst PW should also be mentioned.

In 1941, sanitary installations were satisfactory. In certain camps there were as many as 24 showers for 400 men. Many of the rooms were provided with ventilators, and the buildings were properly insulated against the heat.

Altogether, there was a shortage of medicaments, in particular quinine for treating malaria. The diseases most common were typhoid fever, dysentery, malaria and syphilis. The majority of PW were vaccinated against typhus. Paraffin oil was poured on the surface of ponds near some camps to prevent the spread of malaria.

In 1942, cholera broke out in several camps, but was effectively dealt with. In some camps there were more than 500 cases of

sypilis. One of the most difficult problems to solve was a regular supply of water. The chief anxiety of the doctors was to prevent epidemics.

It was observed in 1943 that the men who had been vaccinated did not have cholera. On the other hand, it was found very difficult to contend with malaria in certain camps, where 60 to 80 per cent of PW were stricken. Typhoid fever and dysentery were an almost continual menace and extensive measures were taken against them ; there was also a great need of medicaments, and the ICRC rendered substantial services in this field.

From 1944 onwards everything was working satisfactorily in PW camps in India. Serums were sent out to the infirmaries in Ceylon, where venomous snakes were common.

United States. — Conditions of hygiene were, generally speaking, wholly satisfactory in the camps, where PW began to arrive at the beginning of 1943.

In certain areas, however, the hot, damp climate had very grave drawbacks, particularly for PW working in sugar plantations, at cotton picking or in swampy forests.

Many of the PW had been captured in North Africa, where they had picked up the germs of malaria ; they often stated that they had contracted their illness in the United States. At all events, the American authorities took steps to diminish the causes of infection. In principle, PW were deloused immediately on arrival, and their clothing and all equipment were disinfected. They all underwent a very thorough medical examination, after which they were vaccinated. In many of the camps, hot or cold water was available at any hour, and the men could even take a shower every day.

Camps were generally situated in healthy parts of the country. Clewiston Camp was an exception to this rule, as it was in the sub-tropical region. PW worked there in the sugar fields, where there was constant danger from venomous snakes ; the soil was black and the men worked in a cloud of dust. The premises were in bad condition and the sanitary system defective. The higher American authorities were unaware of these facts until informed of them by the delegates of the ICRC.

France. — After the liberation in 1944, there were a large number of German PW in this country. The destruction of every kind inflicted by the occupying forces, and the continuous bombing by the Allied air forces made the problem of hygiene in the camps extremely difficult.

Camps already in existence had usually been looted after the departure of the occupying Power, the bedding taken away and articles of clothing destroyed. At the beginning of 1945, this equipment was still lacking. In all the camps, scabies and lice were endemic ; disinfectants and cleaning materials were almost entirely absent.

In many camps there was practically no medical service, and the premises were damp and dirty. The ICRC issued sulphur ointment for the relief of men suffering from scabies ; vermin spread more and more, and delousing took place very rarely. There were almost no showers, and drinking water had to be carried fairly great distances. Living quarters were not yet satisfactory at the beginning of the winter of 1945-6 ; in many cases PW slept on the floor, whether of earth, cement or wood. Straw was lacking, and what there was in some of the quarters was several months old. One camp for instance was allotted two tons of straw instead of 200, and 500 bunks instead of 20,000 in September 1945.

On the whole, blankets were extremely scarce. In one camp (Vitry-le-François), where general conditions were the same as elsewhere, the guard-rooms, which had damp walls, were used as an infirmary ; the windows were small and there was no electric light. The patients lay on the floor without any straw, five to seven in each cell ; they were mostly dying of dysentery. We must also mention a hospital near Lyons, of which the method of construction (concrete huts), equipment, sanitary installations, and heating were totally inadequate. The operating theatre could not be heated ; there were no W.C. inside the buildings, and the roof of some of the wards was leaking badly.

This state of affairs obliged the ICRC to approach the head of the Army Medical Service in November 1945. A certain improvement took place, apparent in the following year, as a

result of this step. Large relief consignments sent by the ICRC were also a contributory factor in this improvement.

In 1946 it was observed that, as a rule, sanitary installations (showers and latrines) were not too bad, and sometimes even fairly good. Living quarters in some of the camps were satisfactory, or were greatly improved.

From the spring of 1946, the delegates reported that great progress had been made as regards living quarters, camp equipment and cook-houses, mess halls, infirmaries, etc.; there were still, however, a number of camps where PW slept on the floor, and where the sanitary equipment (showers, delousing) needed improvement, to meet even minimum requirements.

In this connection, reference should be made to the Aiguebelle factories which employed a squad of PW. After a whole year, the management had not made even the most indispensable sanitary arrangements. The delegate of the ICRC declared that he would have the squad removed, and this led to a gradual improvement in hygienic conditions. The same conditions applied to a detachment of PW in Vaucluse, where the men were lodged in a former stable, without light or proper ventilation: it had a low ceiling, was damp and infested with rats.

In 1947, the material situation had improved in most camps, thanks to inspection carried out by the authorities and the delegates of the ICRC. As late as January, 1947, the attention of the Committee was called to a camp where the living quarters were still wholly inadequate after twenty-two months (levelled earth floor, impossible to clean or heat, and entire absence of sanitary installations).

(E). INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL NEEDS OF PRISONERS OF WAR

Under this heading, the Convention provides that prisoners shall be free to practice their religion (Art. 16) and recommends the Detaining Power to encourage as much as possible "intellectual and sporting pursuits" organized by the prisoners (Art. 17). On this slight basis the ICRC undertook extensive schemes to enable the prisoners to develop their religious,

intellectual interests, their recreational pursuits, games and sports and so to bring them, during their captivity which was more and more irksome as it went on, very considerable moral support.

1. Religious Life

Article 16 of the Convention reads as follows :

Prisoners of war shall be permitted complete freedom in the performance of their religious duties, including attendance at the services of their faith, on the sole condition that they comply with the routine and police regulations prescribed by the military authorities.

Ministers of religion, who are prisoners of war, whatever may be their denomination, shall be allowed freely to minister to their co-religionists.

The ICRC endeavoured to arrange that this provision should be widely applied, either by taking steps itself, or by collaborating with religious institutions giving moral help to PW, with whom it was in touch from the very beginning of the war. The ICRC particularly instructed its delegates to give attention to this question, when visiting camps, and to make contact with the chaplains.

Most of the Detaining Powers applied the provisions of the Convention in a very liberal manner.

The ICRC was, however, called on to intervene in Germany. Detailed regulations referring to the religious life of the prisoners had been issued in that country on May 12, 1941. In spite of that, a fairly large number of complaints reached the Committee of the inadequacy of religious help in the camps. In certain camps there was an excessive number of priests or ministers, while there was a shortage of them in others. The ICRC and its delegates often had success in their efforts, and in many cases managed to get remedied conditions from which the morale of the prisoners suffered.

The Committee specially urged that ministers of religion, that is chaplains who had served in the army in that capacity and were now detained in camps, as well as PW who, before being enlisted, were clergymen in civil life, should be properly detailed to the camps and labour detachments. The ICRC

pointed out to the German authorities the camps which had too many or too few chaplains. It requested that in each labour detachment there should be a minister of religion, or at least, that the chaplain of a labour detachment might visit neighbouring detachments, 15 or 20 at most.

Religious care for Yugoslav prisoners required special provision, since in many camps there were no priests of the Orthodox Church. Responding to the requests of the ICRC, the German authorities arranged that priests from camps where they were in excess number, should be transferred to camps where there were too few. Nevertheless, as there was only a few Orthodox priests on whom to call, it was necessary to give first consideration to the cases where the need for religious ministrations was the most urgent ; a list of these was handed in at Berlin by the delegation of the ICRC. In camps where British prisoners were in the minority, and where the constant presence of a minister was not called for, the delegate saw to it that these prisoners should be visited regularly by a Protestant chaplain.

In co-operation with the religious organizations, it was arranged that in Germany members of seminaries and theological students, whose status as such had been proved, should also be authorised to carry out all the duties of their religion in respect of their fellow-prisoners.

On July 14, 1943, the ICRC issued a memorandum to all belligerent Governments, drawing their attention to the situation of PW and civilian internees of all religions and beliefs who, in practice, ministered spiritually to their fellows. The ICRC noticed that after a long period of confinement the prisoners and internees increasingly sought spiritual help from religious directors, and it pointed out that these men would be better able to carry out their task, if they had comparative freedom, with opportunity to refresh their spiritual forces through contact with the outside world. The ICRC therefore urged that the Governments should grant persons who, in practice, were carrying out religious duties among their fellow-prisoners, the facilities generally given to members of the medical staff in camps (permission to leave camp regularly, permission to write more frequently, better rations, etc.)

This request was generally received with interest and favourably considered ; facilities were granted to the religious ministers, especially to travel to and fro between the camps and the labour detachments.

Although the Convention says nothing on this subject, in principle the Detaining Authorities supplied PW with the articles necessary for the holding of services. Nevertheless, there was opportunity for useful relief work in this field. Alongside the " intellectual assistance ", referred to later on, the ICRC, working with the religious organisations, sent the chaplains of the camps and the PW themselves Bibles, prayer books, missals and religious publications, and articles required for religious observances.

The Committee took special interest in PW from the East, who were much more cut off in Europe than the Christians. Through the ICRC, the Muslims received Korans and " tespihs " (a sort of rosary) ; the Hindus received carpets and prayer wheels, oil for their hair and even " tirpans " (small steel daggers) which are a symbol of the Sikh religion. Since these daggers were 25 cm long, the German authorities forbade them. It was found possible to replace them by miniature " tirpans " manufactured in India and measuring 1 inch. The ICRC was also instrumental in having published in Switzerland prayer books in the five most widely spread Indian languages. These were at first refused by the German censorship, but were allowed in February 1944.

2. Intellectual Life

Books. — From the very start of the Red Cross, Henry Dunant had raised the problem of the " moral welfare " of PW. In 1870, the Basle agency, founded under the auspices of the ICRC, had forwarded to prisoners books collected in France and in Switzerland. During the first World War, there was considerable development of " intellectual relief ", thanks to the joint action of the Governments of neutral States, of the Red Cross Societies, and of other philanthropic or cultural associations. The ICRC, however, did not have any direct part in it.

In the recent War, when millions of men were held captive for long years, special efforts were made throughout the world to combat the detrimental effects of prolonged internment, which often deeply affected the morale and even the bodily health of PW.

The first thing to do was to give the PW something to read ; this was indispensable for their mental health, particularly for those who did not work. Clearly, the Detaining Power could not supply them with as many books as they needed in their own language. Thus a large scheme for intellectual relief was undertaken by many national and international organizations, among which mention should specially be made of the World Alliance of YMCA, which did admirable work. This relief work consisted above all in the sending to PW and civilian internees of all nationalities, school and university text-books and works, and periodicals of all kinds ¹. The ICRC on its side contributed in two ways ; in the first place, it coordinated the work of the various specialized organisations, thanks to its centralized information on PW and through the work done by its delegates in the camps ; secondly, it was of service as an intermediary for the forwarding of the intellectual relief which certain Red Cross Societies, public and private organisations and even private persons, brought to it.

Thus, in February 1940, the ICRC presided over an " Advisory Committee on Reading Matter for Prisoners ", the creation of which, on a suggestion from the German Government and the British Red Cross, it had proposed to six religious and lay organizations which were providing intellectual relief for PW ².

This body, by coordinating the activities of these organisations and avoiding duplication in allocation of books, rendered very valuable services during the whole war.

¹ This scheme comprised the sending of articles for use in religious services ; it also included the supply of material for artists, games, and sporting gear.

² The World Alliance of YMCA, the International Education Bureau, the Ecumenical Commission for Assistance to PW, the European Student Relief, the International Federation of Associations of Librarians, the Swiss Catholic Mission for PW.

On the other hand, the ICRC itself set up an Intellectual Relief Service, which issued the books sent to it, and endeavoured to meet the requests of authorities, national Red Cross Societies and camp leaders. The work of the ICRC in this field will be described in Vol III. We shall do no more here than mention that the ICRC alone, by the end of the war, had sent to the camps nearly a million and a half books, after having sorted, classified, and often repaired them.

In a general way, the Detaining Powers authorized the PW, in accordance with Art. 38, to receive individual or collective parcels containing books. These consignments were subject to a very strict censorship, which was however, in time relaxed. In Germany, the authorities drew up a definitive list of prohibited books, other literature being thereafter not subject to censorship. Each camp library was an integral part of the camp, and could not be removed from one place of internment to another. Nevertheless, when a language ceased to be spoken in a camp, books written in that language were sent to another camp.

The United States and the British Commonwealth authorities took similar censorship measures and established lists of prohibited books. In Italy, the sending of books met with greater difficulties. All other Detaining Powers allowed books to be sent direct to camps, but the Italian authorities required that such consignments should first undergo two examinations, the first carried out at Rome, and then a fresh censorship on arrival in the camps.

Towards the end of the war, the millions of books in the hands of PW represented a considerable cultural value, the greater by reason of the destruction and difficulties of publication from which the belligerent countries suffered. Already in February 1944, the ICRC got into touch with the responsible authorities of the Detaining States, with a view to ensuring the preservation of the books and their return to the countries of origin.

Studies. — When the ICRC gave help to the PW to enable them to continue their studies, it embarked on an activity not alluded to in the Convention, which speaks only of “intellectual pursuits”. Indeed, many PW expressed the desire to

complete their education, to improve their professional knowledge, and to continue their studies which had been interrupted by the war.

Devoting attention to this question, the ICRC did everything in its power to bring the detaining authorities to allow the PW to carry out these activities, subject to camp regulations. In its view, the PW would thus not only find a helpful diversion during their captivity, but also equipment for their future career. The Committee asked to have students assembled, study centres set up, teachers who were PW allocated and the necessary buildings and technical material made available. In spite of the obstacles due to the war, the Committee had the satisfaction of obtaining most useful results.

With the help of the camp libraries, classes of all kinds (technical, professional, modern languages), and in all stages (elementary, secondary and university), were given by the PW some of whom were distinguished in the teaching profession.

The "Camp Universities" which were started in 1914/18, developed very considerably during the recent War. In Germany, they already existed in the autumn of 1940 in the camps for French officers. In response to the urgent appeals of the ICRC and the European Student Relief, the German authorities assembled university graduates and students in separate camps. The first of these was Stalag IA at Stargard (East Prussia), established in the spring of 1941. Here there were about 3,000 men. PW students were sometimes assembled for work by faculties (theology, law, language and literature, science, medicine).

In Great Britain, nearly 200 German medical students were collected in Camp 23, near Birmingham, at the request of the Committee's delegation in London. Led by 24 doctors, from March 1945 onward they became what was known as the "Medical Academy". As they had good accommodation with excellent lighting, they were able to work late at night. Two huts were exclusively reserved for lectures, one for a clinical course, and the other for pre-clinical lectures. To illustrate their teaching, the doctors carried out demonstrations on patients in the camp hospital. In 1945, the ICRC sent this school complete

and illustrated editions of works on anatomy and other branches of medicine, and equipment for their studies.

Laboratories were set up in various camps, particularly in Germany ; the ICRC sent them skeletons, microscopes, stethoscopes, and even 70 live frogs.

The ICRC also tried to enable PW to follow correspondence courses. In 1940, it obtained permission to send British PW courses of this kind, published by the technical schools and universities of Great Britain. By way of reciprocity, the German PW in Allied camps received a monthly publication from the German Ministry of Education, which enabled them to study for various professions. The American authorities did much to promote study by prisoners. Already in 1944 the Committee's delegation established contacts by correspondence between the camps and the American universities, which lent books and even arranged for courses. The Italian authorities forbade correspondence courses till 1943, when they allowed them at the request of the ICRC.

Examinations were held in the camps. Many universities and technical schools recognised their validity, provided that they had approved the composition of the examining board. PW in captivity were able to write their thesis for a doctor's degree.

Agricultural experts, commercial and business clerks, artisans, artists, men of letters and scientists, provided with the adequate books and equipment, were able to do research work, write books, and produce works of art. The ICRC saw to the safe keeping of their manuscripts and work, and to the protection of their copyright. As from 1943, Allied PW in Germany and German PW in Allied hands were able to send their work to the ICRC, which forwarded it to their home countries.

Lastly, mention should be made of the efforts to encourage the vocational training of disabled PW. Thus the ICRC was able to send many consignments of Braille material for the blind.

3. Recreation and Sports

In accordance with Art. 17 of the Convention, the detaining States encouraged recreational pursuits of PW who were able to

fit up halls for theatricals and games. Orchestras and theatre companies were formed in the camps, and were even able to visit labour detachments. PW were allowed to receive musical instruments, scores of music, theatrical accessories, and indoor games. After December 1941, French PW in Germany were allowed to see German films, synchronized in their language, and then films coming from France. An arrangement based on reciprocity allowed, as from April 1942, that Allied PW in Germany and German PW in Allied hands should receive films from their country of origin. The ICRC previously submitted them to the Detaining Power for approval.

The PW were allowed to publish newspapers which appeared in the camps; for that purpose, they received the necessary paper and material from the Detaining Power, except at certain times when there was a paper shortage. The relief organizations did their best to make good the lack.

Leisure time was given up to gardening. After 1942, the ICRC was able to send the camps both vegetable and flower seeds, and tools.

PW were also able to play games. They were allowed to lay out playing fields and receive from home the necessary equipment, with the exception of certain implements that were forbidden.

The British and American PW made urgent requests to receive sporting news from their country, and the ICRC managed to arrange that this should be sent, as from the autumn of 1943. Similar facilities were assured for German and Italian PW. Thus, twice a month the Canadian Red Cross telegraphed to the ICRC sporting bulletins, which were very much appreciated in the camps.

(F). PECUNIARY RESOURCES OF PRISONERS OF WAR

The rules concerning the pecuniary resources of PW are laid down in Arts. 6, 22, 23, 24 and 34 of the 1929 Convention.

In accordance with the principles already embodied in the Hague Regulations of 1907, these Articles provide that all

personal belongings remain the property of PW, that the Detaining Power shall give their pay to PW officers, and that other ranks compelled to work shall receive wages.

The experience of the last War has shown that there are certain deficiencies and even certain contradictions in the texts in force.

In the case of pay, Art. 23 says :

This pay shall be paid to them in full... and no deduction therefrom shall be made for expenditure devolving upon the Detaining Power, even if such expenditure is incurred on their behalf.

Art. 24 implicitly recognizes the right of the Detaining Power to fix the "maximum amount that the prisoners of war of various ranks shall be authorized to retain in their possession", which restricts the scope of the previous article. In the same way, wages are guaranteed by Art. 34, but this same Article refers to "the part that the camp administration may retain". Similar indefinite terms were already to be found in the Hague Regulations. These allowed in Art. 6 "deduction for expenses of maintenance", thus contradicting the provisions of the next Article, which made the Detaining Power responsible for "maintenance" of PW.

It is true that the 1929 Convention had provided that agreements should be negotiated between the belligerents, to regulate the matter of the pecuniary resources of PW. In practice, however, it was only possible to conclude very few agreements, and those did not, by any means, cover the whole question. Furthermore, restrictions of all kinds in respect of transfers of funds were imposed by the general control of currency exchange during the war, and these reduced to nil, or considerably restricted the "facilities" provided for in Art. 24 for the management of accounts of PW.

Without encroaching upon the functions of the Protecting Power, or those of the official information bureaux, which under Art. 77 are obliged to "collect all personal effects valuables, correspondence, pay-books, identity tokens..., and to transmit them to the countries concerned", the ICRC intervened in order to ensure that the spirit of the Convention should be

respected, as far as possible. It endeavoured, in particular, to reduce deductions from pay or wages, to facilitate the transfer of assignments of pay or wages, and to provide as satisfactorily as possible for the settlement of the accounts of PW released.

1. Pay

The principle accepted by the Convention was that officer PW received their pay from the Detaining Power, and that after the War, the sums paid to them should be reimbursed by the Power in whose armies these officers had served.

During the recent War, officer PW were regularly paid. The ICRC only had to record complaints in the few cases where the officer's status was disputed. It should, however, be noted that the German Government ceased to disburse the pay of Polish and Yugoslav officers, claiming that it was impossible for these States, which had ceased to exist, to repay them these amounts.

In order to establish equivalence of ranks in their respective armies, the belligerents drew up lists which they communicated to each other as soon as hostilities began, either through the Protecting Power or through the ICRC. In October 1939, Germany forwarded a nomenclature, whereas England did so only in January 1940, Italy in April 1941, and Japan in May 1942.

It was not always easy to establish equivalence of ranks, particularly as between armies of Western and Eastern countries. Thus a special arrangement between the German and British authorities was necessary in order to regulate the status of officers of the Indian Army. Furthermore, Germany for a long time refused officer status and pay to French officer cadets (*aspirants*); it was only after long negotiations undertaken by the ICRC that this matter was partly settled.

In accordance with the Convention, the rates of exchange for the disbursement of pay were fixed by agreements concluded between the belligerents either direct, as between France and Germany, or, as in most cases, through the Protecting Powers. Amongst agreements concluded in such conditions, mention should be made of the Italo-British agreement which fixed the

rate at 72 lire for one pound sterling, and the German-American agreement which named a rate of 2.5 Reichsmarks for one dollar.

The Anglo-German agreement gave rise to various difficulties, which the ICRC endeavoured to remove. The British paid German officers on a basis of one pound sterling for 24 Reichsmarks, whereas the German fixed a parity of ten Reichsmarks for one pound sterling. As from June 1940, Germany took measures of reprisal by giving British officers and those of equivalent status half-pay. The conciliatory efforts of the Protecting Power and of the ICRC brought about a compromise in November 1940, fixing the rate of exchange for one pound sterling at fifteen Reichsmarks. Pay calculated on this basis was made to the PW with retrospective effect from the date of their capture. In August 1945, the British Government altered this rate, and fixed the rate of exchange for the pound sterling no longer at fifteen, but at forty Reichsmarks. This change had serious consequences for the officers and members of the protected personnel who, from one day to another, thus lost two-thirds of their pay. Some of them were paid even less henceforward than other ranks compelled to work.

This state of things, against which the ICRC repeatedly protested, continued until the time came when the British authorities were faced with the problem of reimbursing the credit balances of PW repatriated. Being obliged for this operation to return to the rate of fifteen Reichsmarks to the pound sterling laid down by the Anglo-German agreement of November 1940, the British Government realized that it could not repay fifteen Reichsmarks for a pound, which it had reckoned at forty during the previous year. In order to avoid this injustice, which would have made the officers lose 62.5% of the pay received by them between these two exchange transactions, it decided to reckon the pay at the original rate of 15 Reichsmarks to the pound sterling, with retrospective effect up to August 31, 1945. Things were thus put in order.

Officers' pay was issued to them either in camp money, or in the currency of the Detaining Power.

Since no agreement had been concluded as to the amount of the sums available to PW officers, the clause according to

which they were expected to purchase clothes and food themselves out of their pay did not work, and the Detaining Powers therefore provided these, fixing deductions from pay, which they used for the maintenance of PW. These deductions led to many complaints, but in view of the vagueness of the treaty texts, the ICRC could take no action in this matter.

The Committee nevertheless endeavoured to defend the rights of PW who had officer's status, when these rights were disputed. Thus, in April 1941, the ICRC undertook negotiations to have pay granted to officers of the Italian Army who were natives of the Italian colonies. In the same way, the Paris Delegation intervened, in November 1946, in favour of officers in certain French camps, who were natives of the Saar and whose pay had been refused.

The provisions of Art. 23 apply only to officers, and leave NCOs who do not volunteer for work and other ranks unfit for work, without any pecuniary resources, and therefore unable to obtain small indispensable articles, such as soap and tobacco. The ICRC gave attention to this matter from the beginning of the war, and on its suggestion, certain of the belligerents decided to improve it. France and Germany were the first Powers to pay a small daily allowance to NCOs and men who did not work. In Germany, this allowance was generally levied by the camp commandants on the wages of PW working, and the same was done in Italy.

The pay of medical officers, of medical personnel and chaplains is guaranteed by Art. 13 of the Geneva Convention for the Relief of Sick and Wounded, the Detaining Power being responsible for this pay. Cases in which medical personnel who had proved their status were refused pay were an exception : when the ICRC was informed of such incidents, it always caused the rights of these PW to be fully respected. It also had to intervene several times in order that chaplains should be paid in accordance with their rank.

At the request of the Italian Government, the ICRC in the spring of 1941, successfully approached the British Government in order to stop deductions of pay in respect of medical personnel in PW camps in Egypt.

2. Wages

Though it did not raise any great difficulties, the remuneration of the work of PW nevertheless led to somewhat different interpretations, by reason of the vagueness of certain clauses in Art. 34.

Section 1 lays down that no payment shall be made for work in connection with the administration, the internal arrangements and the maintenance of the camps. Certain States, Germany and Belgium amongst others, applied this rule in a fairly liberal manner. Other States, on the contrary, did not hesitate to classify as unpaid work tasks such as felling timber and unloading coal.

Section 2 stipulates that all work other than that for the management, arrangement or maintenance of camps, shall give the "right to a rate of pay to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents". The ICRC had no knowledge of any agreement of this kind. Negotiations on this subject carried on from 1940 to 1944 between the British and German Governments were unsuccessful. Failing such an agreement, it was necessary to revert to the application of the far too vague terms of Art. 34.

Two cases are provided for in this Article, which makes a distinction between work done for the State, and that done for other public bodies or for private persons. In the first case, the PW are to be paid "in accordance with the rates in force for soldiers of the national forces doing the same work, or if no such rates exist, according to a rate corresponding to the work executed". In the second case, the conditions of work "shall be settled in agreement with the military authorities". Since no State pays its troops wages for the work required of them, the wages of the PW were in practice left entirely to the discretion of the detaining authorities. The wages therefore varied very considerably.

Moreover, Art. 34 does not fix the portion of the wages which the Detaining Power is authorized to retain. On this point also, the PW were subject to arbitrary decisions. Nevertheless, the sums withheld from them were seldom excessive, and in accordance with the practice followed by all the belligerents, in the spirit of the Convention, these sums were in fact expended on the maintenance of the PW.

Germany. — In the industries and trades, PW received 60 per cent of the rate paid to civilian workers ; they were paid overtime in the same proportion. In agriculture, PW received a very small daily wage, but they were fed and lodged by their employer. As an example, the question of wages was settled at Stalag X C, at Nienburg, in the following manner :

Sum paid to the camp by the employer,	
per day and per man	RM. 1.80
Deducted : for food.	RM. 0.80
for board	0.20
for camp fund	0.10
	<hr/>
Total	RM. 1.10
Actually received by the PW.	<hr/> RM. 0.70 <hr/>

United States. — In accordance with a rate which applied to all camps and all kinds of work, PW always received 80 cents a day, which represented a monthly wage of 24 dollars. PW working for private employers were entitled to the normal wage of a civilian worker in the district, but only received 80 cents in practice, the difference being placed to their credit. They were nevertheless much better off than other PW. In certain cases, PW were paid by piece work. This was the case at El Reno (Oklahoma), where PW earned from 80 cents to 1 dollar 20 cents a day, according to the amount of work done.

On May 1944, the U.S. War Department ordered that PW should be paid according to results, wherever the latter could be estimated. This order applied particularly to forestry work. From that time, in order to earn 80 cents, each PW had to cut a minimum of one cord of wood for pulping, i.e. about 128 cubic feet every day. This task was not excessive, as the Committee's delegation in the United States pointed out, since a wood-cutter by trade easily cuts more than two cords a day. Nevertheless, certain PW did not manage to do the minimum of work required. In such cases, their working hours were not increased, but their wages were reduced in proportion to the work done.

France. — PW invariably received ten French francs a day, whatever their work or working hours ; as a rule they were given five francs in camp money, and five francs were credited for purchases in the canteen. In certain camps, however, they received no money direct, all their wages being credited to them. This was the case in Depot No. 43, at La Treballe, at the Cavalry School Command at Saumur (Depot 402) and at the Pouancey Command (Depot 401). It even occurred that civil contractors employing PW labour did not pay the wages due to the men. In all such cases, the ICRC took active steps to put a stop to this state of things.

It was possible to increase the daily wages of ten francs by bonuses. A system of bonuses for increased output only existed, however, in undertakings which demanded heavy labour from the PW. Thus, certain men in Depot No. 132, at Mauriac, who were working on the construction of a barrage, received bonuses varying from 10 to 20 francs daily. The PW of Depot No. 11, at Barlin (mining centre in Northern France), received bonuses varying from 1 to 20 francs. These bonuses, like the wages, were paid half in camp money and half as credits, so that PW who earned the maximum received in practice 15 francs pocket-money a day. This system of bonuses seems to have gradually become general in all labour detachments working in mines. There were no deductions from the sums received by the PW working in these detachments.

Great Britain. — PW who were unskilled workers received six shillings a week, and skilled workers twelve shillings. In practice, the employer making use of PW labour had to pay the State one shilling per hour and per man (whether skilled or not). The result was that unskilled workers received about 12 per cent of the wages actually paid by the employer ; the skilled workers received 25 per cent. The difference, i.e. 88 per cent and 75 per cent respectively, was kept by the State for maintenance expenses of PW, under Art. 34, Sec. 3. The ICRC noted the retention of these very large amounts without being able to oppose this practice.

The actual wages were paid to PW in token money, which they

could spend at the camp canteen, or pay to the credit of their accounts. In the case of PW working for farmers, employers were authorized to spend a sum not exceeding five shillings weekly for each of them. This sum was reimbursed to the farmers by the camp management and debited to each PW.

As the retention of such sums hardly encouraged the PW to work, the British authorities doubled the wages and then instituted a bonus, which could amount to 50 per cent of the wages and which was paid to PW whose work was considered satisfactory. It should be added that, at the request of the ICRC, PW who were not paid when their work was stopped by bad weather, received their wages whenever they had travelled the necessary distance to reach their place of work.

Delays in payment of wages gave more anxiety to the ICRC than the rates of the wages themselves. In France, for instance, delays of several months were reported. In March 1946, the delegation in Paris protested strongly against the fact that 60 detachments of German prisoners working on reconstruction in the Dunkirk area had not been paid since August 25, 1945. At the same time, this delegation obtained from the French authorities an increase in the wages of the German PW used for mine-disposal.

Certain delays in payment of wages were also noted in the United States, and the delegates of the ICRC took action in respect of these.

3. Assignment of Pay and Wages. Remittances

As early as the summer of 1940, French PW in Germany were able to send money regularly to their wives, children or parents. As a result of action by the ICRC, they were able, some months later, to assign pay also to other persons. This system gave no rise to complaints, except in respect of the limits, which were sometimes too severe, as regards monthly payments. These restrictions were fixed by the camp commandants, and the ICRC had to approach them direct in order that the limit of 80 marks fixed by the PW Directorate in Berlin should be respected.

Assignments of pay were made, under conditions which were more or less easy, by Belgian, Yugoslav, Norwegian and Polish PW. In January 1943, the ICRC undertook negotiations in order that Polish PW might be able to assist persons other than their near relatives.

The Italians in the hands of the British forces were also allowed to transfer money to members of their family living in British territory, or in territory occupied by the British forces. Assignments of pay or wages between Great Britain and the Axis Powers were, however, extremely rare, in spite of the evident desire expressed both by the British and the Germans to arrive at some arrangement ; they were still more infrequent between the United States and those Powers.

In this respect, the capitulation of Italy led to an improvement in the situation and made the assignment of pay easier ; on the other hand, the defeat of Germany led to an entire suspension of all assignments of pay between that country and its enemies.

As soon as hostilities ceased in May, 1945, the German PW were as a rule allowed to send money to their relatives. The ICRC only recorded very few complaints on this subject. On the other hand, it received many complaints concerning the arbitrary rates of exchange fixed for transfers ; it did not think it possible to use its influence in this field, which depends on agreements between States and on their monetary policy.

Although Art. 38 formally recognizes the right of PW to receive and send money, wartime restrictions on transfers of capital prevented the PW in practice from receiving money. The American and British Authorities were especially strict in preventing such transfers. In spite of its efforts, the ICRC was unable to persuade these authorities to change their attitude.

With the exception, therefore, of money sent by nationals of States occupied by the Axis Powers and intended for members of the forces captured by the German and Italian troops, individual transfers were rare, and generally took place through the Protecting Powers. It should be noted, however, that at the request of the ICRC, Italian PW, particularly in the United States, were allowed to draw on their credits for the sums necessary to send relief parcels to their relatives. The ICRC also

carried out a certain number of transfers, which it made subject to the following conditions : (1) that they should be in the nature of relief ; (2) that the sender had obtained the consent of the Powers concerned ; (3) that no other means of despatch was possible. The transfers were carried out through the ICRC delegations. Thus a transfer was made to Geneva of 42 million dollars, the result of a collection taken in the United States amongst German PW¹.

4. Payment of sums belonging to repatriated PW

Arts. 6, 24, and 34 of the Convention give to released PW the right to obtain restitution of property taken from them at the time of capture, and to the payment of the credit balances in their favour, accumulated during captivity, particularly as a result of withholding part of pay or wages.

At the end of the recent War, the laws and regulations enacted in most States in respect of export and import of foreign currency made it very difficult to comply with these obligations.

Furthermore, the States concerned could settle this matter by the special agreements provided for in Art. 83 of the Convention. At the time of the German capitulation, there was, in fact, such an agreement already in force binding the British and German Governments.

The ICRC therefore, without attempting to interfere with the method of applying the obligations contracted by the Detaining States, bent its efforts to ensuring that at least the spirit, if not the letter of the Convention should at all times be respected, and that in practice, released PW should never be deprived of the help which the payment of their credit balance might bring them.

The Anglo German agreement laid down that each of the two Powers should settle the accounts of the PW released by the other. Since the war ended in the unconditional surrender of Germany, there was no German public authority which could assume the responsibility for paying German PW released by

¹ See Vol. III, Part 1, chap. 10.

Great Britain the sums due to them. At first, the British authorities appeared to desire to keep strictly to the agreement which had been formally negotiated by them, but taking into account the action taken by the ICRC in behalf of PW, they adopted another policy, in order that these men could be paid without delay. Similar decisions were made by the United States and French authorities in favour of the German PW released by them.

The credit balances of the German PW released by the British authorities were paid at the rate of 15 Reichsmarks to the pound sterling, at the time of leaving the release camp in the British Zone. The authorities also decided to repay to the PW the foreign currency taken from them at the time of capture. But since a regulation of the Military Government in Germany forbids repatriated PW to hold foreign currency, the British Government transferred these currencies to the British Zone to freeze them in a blocked account, where they will remain until the responsible authorities have taken some decision concerning them. In the same way, Reichsmarks were also to be repaid to repatriated PW, but in June 1947, this payment had in fact still not been made.

The problem of the payment by the American authorities of balances in dollars is settled by Circular 186 of December 31, 1946, issued by G.H.Q. of United States Forces in Europe. The necessary arrangements were made with the Reichsbank, which thanks to its network of agencies, was able to make it easy for PW to present their vouchers and cash them. The rate of one Reichsmark to 40 cents was originally contemplated for these payments. It was replaced by the rate of one Reichsmark to 30 cents, which established a more equitable rate of exchange (equivalent to $4\frac{1}{2}$ dollars for one pound sterling), and in practice meant an increase of 25 per cent in the sums due to the PW.

The foreign currency impounded from PW during their captivity in the United States was returned to them. When released, they are however compelled in Germany to pay it into the Reichsbank, which reimburses the equivalent to them in Reichsmarks.

The French Government returned to repatriated PW the Reichsmarks which had been in their possession, and paid them

in Germany in Reichsmarks what was due to them as wages (or pay, in the case of protected personnel). On the other hand, they left the German Government to pay out to PW the equivalent of their currency, and to issue to officers the amount of the credit balances due to them. Those PW who consented to become voluntary workers in France were granted special conditions for sending Reichsmarks in their possession to their relatives. The currency which they possessed before changing their status was deposited in a French bank. If they desired to release it for the exchange stabilization fund, the equivalent value was credited to them by the issue of a certificate of deposit of funds. Otherwise, the currency remained on deposit for their account, the French Government explicitly reserving the right to make a decision with regard to this currency when these PW finally left for Germany.

In the case of released Austrian and Italian PW, the existence of a Government upon which they were dependent allowed questions concerning the payment of their accounts to be settled by agreements between Governments.

Thus, after more than two years, during which it took many steps to safeguard the credit balances of PW, the ICRC can note with satisfaction that the Detaining Powers have accepted the principles of repayment of credit balances and of reimbursement of foreign currency.

It has still, however, to deal with the many cases in which, for various reasons, the rules thus accepted have not worked in favour of certain PW. It has received many applications from prisoners who either (1) had been given no vouchers ; (2) had lost those documents ; (3) had had them withdrawn during transfers ; (4) could not obtain a voucher because they were repatriated direct from a hospital or a transit camp, without passing once more through the camp to which they belonged ; (5) who had only received part of the credit balance shown on their voucher ; or (6) whose vouchers did not correspond to the sums to which they considered themselves entitled.

The ICRC will pursue its efforts to help these men in obtaining an equitable settlement of the savings they have earned at the cost of the hardships of captivity.

(G). CIVIL CAPACITY OF PRISONERS OF WAR

The Convention provides in Art. 3, Sec. 2, that PW shall retain their full civil capacity. The ICRC was asked for assistance in this matter chiefly by PW who were anxious to learn what steps they should take to exercise their full civil rights, or who wished to protest against curtailment. These applications concerned especially affairs of marriage, divorce, or the making of wills.

Although marriage is a legal transaction, the conclusion of which implies the presence of both parties at the same time, certain belligerent States, including Belgium, France, Germany and Italy enacted special laws permitting PW to marry by proxy in their own country. Other States declined to take this course. It fell to the Committee to sound the Powers as to the position they intended to take up, to inform the PW and their relatives as to the formalities to be observed, to act as intermediary in transmitting the relevant documents¹, and to request the camp commandants to carry out the regulations laid down.

The civil capacity of prisoners, in most countries, did not extend to the right of contracting a marriage with nationals of the Detaining Power or with aliens resident in the territory of that Power. In most cases, such marriages were not permitted, either because they were in conflict with the legislation of the country, which prohibited marriage with enemy nationals, or because they were held to be incompatible with military discipline and with captivity. The Committee, being fully aware of the force of these arguments, did not feel justified in opposing this principle.

It did however intervene on some occasions, moved by considerations of a social character. Thus it urged the German authorities, in 1944—in vain it is true—to allow a group of Belgian prisoners to marry Czech, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian girls, of whom the greater number were expectant mothers.

¹ This transmission was carried out by the Central PW Agency as shown in Vol. II.

The Committee was sometimes called upon to take in hand the interests of PW in divorce proceedings. Judging that this question involved exclusively the laws of the particular country, it therefore referred these cases to the National Red Cross Society concerned. The Committee did, however, intervene direct with the German authorities in circumstances that were clearly out of the ordinary: a German Court, for example, had awarded a divorce in the case of a Polish PW on the grounds of desertion for three years, this period having been spent in captivity.

The Committee frequently acted as an intermediary in transmitting the wills of PW. In exceptional instances, they even took charge of them until the end of hostilities.

(H). WOMEN AND CHILDREN HELD AS PRISONERS OF WAR

1. Women

Article 4 of the Convention states that "differences of treatment between prisoners are permissible only if such differences are based on the military rank, the state of physical or mental health, the professional abilities, or the sex of those who benefit from them". Article 3 lays down that women shall be treated with all consideration due to their sex.

In the second World War large numbers of women were enlisted in the forces as combatants, auxiliaries in the medical and nursing services, or at military headquarters.

The Red Army had the greatest number of enlisted women, especially as combatants. Other Powers drafted women into the Forces, but chiefly in the auxiliary services. At the beginning of the war the Committee had no occasion to intervene in behalf of women prisoners, because their treatment was in conformity with the provisions of the Convention, or because intervention was out of the question. The action of the Germans in turning Russian women of the armed forces whom they had captured, into civilian workers attracted the special attention of the Committee. No effective action, however, could be taken in

the face of German opposition to any steps in behalf of nationals of a State not signatory to the Convention.

On October 2, 1944, the "Armja Krajowa", General Bor-Komorowski's so-called Polish Underground Army, laid down its arms. The terms of the capitulation recognized the status of PW to all combatants surrendering to the Germany forces, and in particular to the women auxiliaries. Unfortunately, these stipulations were only partially observed. From November 1944 onwards, protests were received from Polish women camp leaders and from the Polish Red Cross in London, that women of the "Armja Krajowa" were suffering injury due to violations of the Convention. These complaints alleged that the German authorities refused to recognize the ranks of officer and NCO conferred by the Polish High Command, and that they were compulsorily changing the status of many women prisoners into that of civilian workers. Complaints reaching Geneva also laid stress on the cramped accommodation in their camps and other hardships, such as the lack of heating, clothing, and food, the inadequate medical attention provided for expectant mothers, sick and wounded, many of whom died in the camp hospitals, where PW doctors were short of equipment and medical supplies. Further, the compulsion imposed on officers and NCOs to do heavy work, contrary to the Convention, lowered still further the poor state of health of women PW.

The Committee's delegates who visited the camps where Polish women were detained, could not but confirm that these complaints were well-founded. The Committee's representatives in Berlin approached the German authorities and sought to get some improvement of conditions for the Polish women. Assurances were given that no further forcible conversions into civilian workers would be made, and that Polish women would be accommodated in separate camps, where they would receive treatment in accordance with their sex and state of health. Despite these assurances, the delegates noted no appreciable improvement in the course of later visits.

Fully alive to the importance of the problem, the ICRC made an appeal on January 9, 1945, to the Governments of Germany, Great Britain, France and the United States, drawing attention

to Art. 3 and 4 of the Convention and laying stress on the privileged treatment which should properly be accorded to women prisoners of war. "The Committee", the appeal stated, "ventures to suggest that Articles 3 and 4 of the 1929 Convention concerning the treatment of prisoners of war should be interpreted in the most liberal manner, and that in particular women prisoners of war should be accommodated in camps separate from those for male PW, or whenever practicable they should be placed in the camps for women civilian internees."

The replies of the French and United States Governments disclosed that only a very few women belonging to the German Army were in the hands of these Powers, and that such prisoners were accommodated in special camps or in compounds set apart for them in ordinary PW camps. These two Governments further stated their intention to repatriate women PW without delay, beginning with expectant mothers and the sick, and without making it a condition that the German Government should take similar action. They made certain reservations, however, concerning women enlisted in the nursing and medical services.

The repatriation of German women PW was effected in part by way of Switzerland; the Committee approached the Swiss authorities to allow their passage through Swiss territory.

In February 1945, acting on a request from the Polish Red Cross in London, the ICRC began negotiations to secure the accommodation in Switzerland of women prisoners from the "Armja Krajowa". The German and Swiss governments had signified their agreement in principle to the transfer when, with the fall of the Reich, it became unnecessary.

2. Children

The moral and physical sufferings of children and young persons are one of the most tragic features of modern war. Those affected are, by reason of their very helplessness, the most deserving of protection, and there is also the danger that such expe-

riences may leave their mark upon a whole generation. To rescue the young from the perils and privations of war, and to prevent the emergence of a generation of people impaired mentally and physically thereby, has been the main object of all the efforts in behalf of the young people during the present conflict. This was the aim constantly before the ICRC in all its endeavours to get some improvement in the lot of young prisoners.

Several armies enlisted youths, and even children in their combatant forces. Germany especially, which before the war had been training its young people in the Hitler Youth and the Labour Service, had a considerable number of soldiers under 18 years of age.

The problem of protection for young PW did not however become acute until the last phase of the war, when the Wehrmacht, hard-pressed by the lack of fighting troops, sent thousands of youths to the firing-line.

The Committee's delegates visiting camps for PW in Allied hands noted the presence of young soldiers, many of whom were mere children. They urged that they should be granted privileged treatment, but met with objections on the part of the Detaining Powers, who held that, as these young PW had been part of the Wehrmacht and had lived under the same conditions as their older comrades, there was no case for separating them from the latter, and further, that as their own government had considered them to be fit to take part in military operations, they were clearly well able to stand the rigours of camp life. Finally, it was pointed out that the rapid developments of the military situation and the fast-approaching end of the conflict made it difficult to go into the question of special measures.

This attitude on the part of the Powers, and the absence in the Convention of any provisions covering under-age PW, made the task of the Committee not an easy one. Even so, it managed, in the spring of 1945, to arrange for the accommodation in Switzerland of young PW from the Polish forces of General Bor-Komorowski. These negotiations were interrupted by the ending of hostilities in May 1945.

The retention in captivity of young PW in Allied hands after the end of the fighting, without prospect of any change in their

status, compelled the ICRC to give itself again to the problem. At this time the PW under age in the hands of the Western Allies were mainly German. Amongst them, however, were Hungarian children evacuated from their home country by the SS, to be put to work in labour camps ; these too were classed as PW. Reports of delegates who visited the camps after the end of the War drew attention to the failure to segregate young prisoners from the adults, and pointed out that the problem of their upbringing and education was being completely neglected. They took note, however, of the fact that efforts were being made in certain camps to remedy this state of affairs ; for example, the establishment of a medical school and a faculty of theology in Great Britain, and the setting-up of a youth-camp in Belgium.

In a circular letter dated December 1, 1945, the ICRC drew the attention of all its delegates to the importance of the problem and instructed them " to note in particular if the conditions under which young prisoners were being held in captivity were satisfactory from the point of view of their age and the education that they should be receiving . . .", and " to draw the attention of camp commandants to experiments being made elsewhere ". These remarks chiefly concerned prisoners under 18 years of age.

In the months which followed, various steps were taken by almost all the Detaining Powers for the benefit of under-age prisoners, but these measures never succeeded in catering for all the young prisoners in the hands of any one Power. Separate compounds were organized in certain camps in Belgium, France, Great Britain and the United States, but the majority of young prisoners continued to live side-by-side with adults. The same was true of educational arrangements.

On May 13, 1946, the Committee in collaboration with the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A. addressed a joint memorandum to three of the chief Detaining Powers, France, Great Britain and the United States. While appreciating what had already been done for young PW, the joint signatories emphasized the necessity of setting up separate camps for young people and of continuing their education. The Department of State in

Washington in their reply expressed doubt as to the wisdom of setting-up distinct camps when the majority of young PW were on the point of being released. The French Foreign Office objected to the setting-up of such camps as not being feasible. The British Foreign Office was of the opinion that the segregation of young and adult would only tend, in the case of German PW, to keep open the gulf created by Nazism between the young and those of more mature years, and that a temporary separation could only be justified by differences in the methods of re-education adopted for young and adult PW.

In the spring of 1946 the British and United States authorities began the progressive release of PW under 18 years of age whose homes were in the American, British and French occupation zones. The French authorities adhered to their policy of releasing only such young persons as were not fit for work.

The Committee did not, however, relax its efforts to improve the lot of young prisoners still in captivity. It devoted its attention in particular to young persons employed on work below the surface in the Belgian and Czechoslovak coal-mines. Representations made to the Belgian authorities in July 1946 were without result, as the laws of that country permit the employment of children in the mines. On the same date, and in November 1946, the Committee made similar representations to the Foreign Office in Prague. In February 1947 an assurance was obtained from the Czech Government that young PW were not liable to be directed to work in mines unless they had passed a searching medical examination, and that the few young persons under 18 years of age who were employed in the Czech mines would be directed to less arduous employment, such as farm work.

(I). DEATHS OF PRISONERS OF WAR

The ICRC did not confine its activities to deaths reported from the battlefield¹, but also applied itself to the problems raised by the deaths of servicemen in captivity.

¹ See above, p. 197 sqq.

Its first effort was to get the belligerent Powers to carry out in full the terms of the Convention (Art. 76, Sec. 2, and Art. 77) relating to *notification of death*, stressing the great importance of prompt and accurate notification, not only for the deceased men's relatives, but also for the Committee's own records. It pointed out, especially in a memorandum dated March 29, 1940, addressed to the belligerent Powers, that in the view of the Committee, the lists of deceased PW sent out by the Detaining Powers should be followed by the official death certificate in each individual case. However, certain belligerents would not go beyond sending collective lists, in which cases the ICRC insisted on the fullest possible details being supplied.

The Committee also endeavoured to have lists of deceased prisoners sent by telegram, whenever the slowness of the ordinary mails and the remote situation of the PW camps justified such a course. In January 1942, the British Government requested the Committee to inform the German and Italian Governments that it was prepared to telegraph the names of German and Italian service-men who had died in captivity, provided the Powers concerned would reciprocate. This offer also applied to the whole British Commonwealth. The Reich and the Italian Government accepted this offer. Moreover, the United States Government sent lists by telegram of German and Italian prisoners who had died.

On the outbreak of hostilities, the Committee suggested to the belligerents the adoption of a *standard form* for notification of death, similar to that devised in the war of 1914-1918. This form, to be completed by the authorities of the Detaining Power, provided supplementary information which could not be given in the lists, but to which the relatives of the deceased attached great importance. It included for instance, details of surname, first name, date and place of birth, address of next of kin, date of capture, place of burial, cause of death, any effects left by the deceased (which were sometimes listed), together with a brief statement from someone who had been with him in his last hours. Several of the belligerent Powers, including

France, Germany and Italy adopted this form, and brought it into general use ¹.

In many instances mail addressed to PW was returned marked "Deceased", although official notification of the prisoner's death had not been received. The ICRC made representations to the belligerents to have this practice stopped, and to ensure that the news was suitably broken to relatives through the local authorities or the national Red Cross.

In 1943 the Committee suggested to the belligerent Powers that a *census of prisoners' graves* should be undertaken by camp leaders. Only the Italian Government declared itself ready to adopt this practice; the other belligerents considered that for security reasons, camp leaders could not be allowed outside camp boundaries.

The belligerents attached great importance to the *funeral ceremonies* of members of their armed forces who had died in enemy hands. The ICRC was sometimes called upon to mediate in dissensions arising between belligerents concerning methods of burial and the religious rites to be observed.

In November 1944, for instance, the French Government complained that a PW in Germany, who had died of pneumonia, had been cremated and not interred, as laid down by the Convention. They felt that this action would cause considerable distress to relatives, who for religious or personal reasons objected to cremation. The Committee obtained from Berlin an assurance that this had been an exceptional case, and that as a rule deceased prisoners would be buried as before, according to the rites of the creed which they professed.

The Government of India asked the Committee to institute enquiries into the methods of burial adopted in the case of Hindu and Muslim prisoners in Germany. They urgently requested that the bodies of Hindus should not be buried but cremated, as required by their religion. The ICRC obtained an assurance from Berlin that, where the camps were near towns having the necessary facilities, the bodies of Hindu prisoners

¹ For information on notification of deaths and standard forms of notification, see Vol. II.

would be cremated. In some cases bodies were cremated outdoors on funeral pyres.

In 1942 the Japanese Government informed the Committee that it was prepared to send to countries of the Allied Powers the ashes of deceased prisoners, in exchange for those of Japanese prisoners who had died in enemy captivity. The British and United States Governments strongly opposed this suggestion, and asked the Committee to request the Japanese Government to arrange that deceased prisoners should be buried and not cremated. After much negotiation the Committee succeeded in obtaining the concession that prisoners' remains should receive honourable burial, except in special cases, where the Detaining Power considered cremation to be imperative.

The *care of graves* rarely caused any disagreement, although there was a complaint from Italy that in Australia their men had been buried in unconsecrated and unenclosed ground in open country, and that the graves bore no inscription to identify them. Having noted in 1946 that in certain PW burial grounds, especially in Germany, the inscriptions on the graves had disappeared, the Committee instructed its delegates to take note, whenever possible, of the state of graves and burial grounds in the neighbourhood, when visiting camps, hospitals and labour detachments. Representations were also made to the French Government, in particular, to bring about the regrouping of the graves of prisoners buried in communal graves or in open country. As a result, over two thousand graves of prisoners who had died between 1945 and 1946 were regrouped at Rennes.

The practice of taking *photographs of the funeral ceremonies and graves* of PW, so that they could be passed on to their relatives, was instituted during the recent war and soon became fairly wide-spread. Delegates, when visiting camps sometimes attended a prisoner's funeral, and it was thus that the idea arose of taking photographs.

In 1942 the British Red Cross suggested that the Committee should organize the exchange of photographs of PW graves, between Germany and Great Britain. A regular exchange of photographs of graves was established, from 1944 onwards, between these two countries, and that of photographs both of

funerals and graves between Germany, Italy and the United States. The National Red Cross Societies, especially the British Red Cross, devoted special care to this work.

Lastly, the Committee received numerous requests from relatives concerning the *sending home of bodies* of deceased prisoners to their native country. The belligerent Powers declared their intention of not going into this matter until after the signing of the Peace Treaties.

IV. Protection of Prisoners against the Dangers of War

(A). PROTECTION OF PRISONERS AGAINST THE DANGERS OF AIR WARFARE

The problem of the safety of PW in relation to military operations did not in fact arise until the first World War. With the development of artillery, PW camps situated too near the front were at times bombarded. The belligerents therefore agreed not to set up depots for prisoners closer than 30 kilometres from the front. The writers of the 1929 Convention considered it advisable to take up this regulation in a more general form in Art. 7, Sec. 1. It also occurred during the first World War that, as a measure of reprisal, certain States exposed prisoners to the fire of the enemy artillery with the purpose of protecting their troops or important sectors from such fire. To put an end to such practices the authors of the Convention considered it necessary to prohibit them explicitly by Art. 9, Sec. 4. The two provisions mentioned above, run as follows :

Art. 7, Sec. 1 : As soon as possible after their capture, prisoners of war shall be evacuated to depots sufficiently removed from the fighting zone for them to be out of danger.

Art. 9, Sec. 4 : No prisoner may at any time be sent to an area where he would be exposed to the fire of the fighting zone, or be employed to render by his presence certain points or areas immune from bombardment.

When the second World War broke out it was obvious that the precautions taken in 1929 had certainly become quite inadequate. Their especial aim was to save PW, whilst they

remained in a district near the fighting zone, from being exposed to artillery fire. Air bombardment, however, has a range over the whole territory of belligerents, and may expose PW, as well as the civil population, to even much more serious danger.

The most expedient means of keeping PW camps free from air attacks, similar to those in view for hospital localities and safety zones, seemed to be the mutual notification by belligerents of the location of camps. The Committee was obliged to take note of the fact, however, that the chief belligerents, when forwarding lists of PW to the Central Agency, failed to give the precise geographical location of the camps; they limited the information to cipher addresses. (In Germany, Oflag or Stalag, followed by a roman number or a capital letter; in France, "Bureau postal de prisonniers" or "Secteur postal"; in Great Britain, Camps No. 1, 2, 3, etc.). The delegates, on their return from their first missions, soon confirmed the formal wish of these Powers to keep to these methods for reasons of military security. The Committee therefore had to delete any allusion to the geographical situation of camps in their delegates' reports on their visits, when forwarding them to the Governments concerned.

This policy differed from that adopted by the belligerents during the war of 1914-1918. It was not, however, contrary to the Convention, no provision of which obliges the detaining Power to indicate the location of PW camps. Although Art. 8 provides that belligerents must notify each other of the official addresses to which letters to PW from their relatives may be addressed, the expression "official address" in no way precludes a cipher address.

Thus the hopes of mutual notification of the location of PW camps, with a view to ensuring the safety of the inmates, appeared forlorn, unless a determined appeal were made to the belligerents. The Committee took that step on December 14, 1939: it sent a note to the British, French and German Governments asking them to agree, on terms of reciprocity, to furnish the geographical location of PW camps. This appeal was partly on the score of easing the anxieties of the prisoners' next of kin; at the same time, the Committee did not conceal the fact

that the steps taken were dictated by the concern it felt as regards the prisoners' safety. It therefore stressed the dangers for PW from air warfare in terms, the precision and scope of which, unhappily, were justified by events.

"If", the Committee wrote, "belligerent Powers wish to maintain their present standpoint and prefer not to make known the location of PW camps, the question arises whether these places should not be marked in some special manner in order to distinguish them from barracks or other permanent army billets.

"In the absence of information on the geographical location of PW camps or of distinctive markings, there may, perhaps, be grounds for fear of attacks in error by an enemy air arm."

The French and British Governments replied in February and March 1940 respectively; both declined the proposal. "It has been recognized afresh," the French Authorities stated, "that there are serious objections to such indications, and it may be recalled that the belligerent Powers, in the absence of agreement amongst themselves, have all adopted the cipher address". The British Authorities merely stated that they were unable to agree to the Committee's suggestion, for reasons of military security. The German Government, aware of these replies, informed the Committee of their standpoint only in May, and also stressed the difficulty of the question; they asked the Committee, however, to continue its study of the matter and stated that the Government were prepared, in order to promote the solution of the problem, to notify location of camps for civilian internees. The authorities having given their consent on this point, information on the location of civilian internee camps was henceforth regularly exchanged.

At the beginning of July, 1940, the Committee's delegate in London took up the matter again with the Foreign Office and sent word that the British Government was prepared to indicate location of PW camps on a reciprocal basis.

A member of the Committee, who was then in Berlin, obtained a similar declaration shortly afterwards from the German authorities. To ensure the strict reciprocity of these notifications, an operation which always requires careful handling, the

two belligerents were requested to communicate without delay to Geneva all information relative to the location of PW camps, whilst assurance was given to them that the information would only be forwarded to the enemy Power after the receipt from it of similar information. The efforts of the Committee thus seemed on the point of succeeding when a cable arrived from the London Delegation, at the end of July, to the effect that the " highest British Authorities " had finally decided not to accept, for the time being, mutual notification of camp locations.

The events of war in 1940 altered the problem and, at the same time, gave the Committee the grounds for a further intervention. In September, the German Government agreed to the proposal of the Committee no longer to keep secret the locations of camps for Belgian and French PW. The Italian Government, moreover, also decided in October to communicate the locations of PW and civilian internee camps in Italy.

On the other hand, the anxiety which the Committee felt at the beginning of the conflict, with regard to the fate of PW during air raids, began to be justified by events. The Committee learned that French PW had been killed in Germany during bombardments, and it was also notified by the British Information Bureau of the names of six German prisoners killed in similar circumstances.

The Committee therefore considered that the time had come to make once more a direct approach to the principal belligerent Powers ; on October 14 it drew their attention to the gravity of the problem and recalled its previous suggestions regarding camp locations and markings. The Committee also requested that the Powers should, on a condition of reciprocity and subject to the ultimate check of the Committee's delegates, take the same precautions against air raids as already practised in some German and British camps, measures which consisted for the most part of trenches and air raid shelters.

Whereas the German Government informed the Committee in December that they agreed in principle to these three suggestions, the British Government replied, about the same date, that after careful consideration of the matter, they could not, for military reasons, rescind their earlier decision : they confirmed

their reply in April 1941, after having been informed of the German acceptance.

Although the Committee's efforts did not lead to an agreement as regards their principal object, they did, however, open the way for certain important improvements in safety measures for PW. In its reply of April 1941, the British Government made it known that safety measures against air raids had been taken, and would continue to be taken, in all PW camps, both in Great Britain and in the Commonwealth, and were open for inspection by the Committee's delegates. The chief belligerents having thus agreed to the Committee's third suggestion, from that time and until the end of hostilities, it was possible for the ICRC, with the help of its delegates, to verify that air raid precautions in PW camps were in force, and it was able to intervene to some purpose when these appeared inadequate. Besides providing underground shelters, or more often trenches, safety measures also included the supply of equipment for dealing with incendiary bombs and the instruction of PW in its use.

The Committee was also successful on another point. It will be recalled that its intervention was partly based on Art. 7 and 9 of the Convention, with the idea that the precise aim of these stipulations was to protect PW from the dangers of warfare, and that they should also apply, in a corresponding manner to the new situations created by the developments in aircraft construction. In the opinion of the Committee, the obligation laid upon belligerents by the Convention to keep PW at a proper distance from the fighting zones should be equally binding for zones within belligerent States which are dangerous because they contain military objectives, and are therefore targets for enemy air attack. Instructions were then given to the delegates on these lines, and they never failed to notify the authorities concerned whenever they considered camps were placed too close to obvious military objectives, and in particular to military airfields. This point of view seemed, in general, to be accepted without question by the belligerents themselves. For instance, the Italian Government informed the Committee in August 1941 that it would see to it that camps were set up in regions far from

all military objectives. British authorities in the Middle East gave a similar answer, when questioned as to the employment of Italian PW for certain work on army airfields, stating that the work of these PW was entirely voluntary and that in the event of air raids the men were immediately taken back to camp.

It should be stressed, however, that the ways open to the Committee for mediation in situations of this kind were narrowed, when the belligerents did not agree that any particular place could be considered as a military objective, or when such areas were bombarded, in violation of the rules of air warfare accepted up to 1939. In 1940, when the Committee took up with the British Government the question of air bombardment of a camp in Great Britain which had caused the deaths of several prisoners, they were informed that the Government did not intend to take any special precautions against the repetition of such incidents, which experience had proved might occur in any area within the range of enemy aircraft. For the same reason, when the attacking of German towns by Allied aircraft became systematic, it appeared difficult to the Committee to approach the German Government, as the British Authorities wished it to do, with a particular request that camps which were near some of the towns, special targets for air attack, should be removed to a distance from such objectives ¹.

The final result of the Committee's efforts was that the belligerents made an exception to the practice of secrecy for camp locations in favour of those housing civilian internees. They made yet another exception, and one which was unquestionably accepted by all, in favour of hospitals and infirmaries which were not attached to a regular camp ².

As mentioned, the German Government also authorized the geographical location of camps holding Belgians, French or

¹ At the end of 1943 however, the Committee decided to enquire from the German Authorities the reasons for the removal of a camp for Air Force prisoners which had been transferred from a country district to the neighbourhood of a Rhine town, thus exposing the PW in camp to a much greater risk.

² This exception did not, however, prevent the bombardment in Germany of the infirmaries of Siegburg, Meiningen and Hildburghausen, which happily did not involve any casualties.

national of other countries occupied by the Reich forces, to appear in the ICRC reports submitted to the countries concerned. In the same manner, the United States did not oppose the communication by the Committee to Germany of the geographical camps in the USA¹. Thus, not only the authorities of the countries of origin but also a great many PW relatives were aware of the approximate location of individual prisoners. Further, between Germany and Great Britain camp locations were not kept entirely secret ; this is proved by the fact that maps were published by the British press in 1941, showing the exact location of PW camps in Germany.

All these facts thus gave hope at the end of 1941, that the refusal of the belligerents to exchange information on camp locations would not in practice have the serious effects which had been feared, particularly as, up to that date, the number of deaths of prisoners notified to the Committee as due to bombardment was relatively very small.

The turn taken by the course of the war from 1942 onwards showed that this hope was ill-founded.

In Italy, in spite of the heavy bombardments suffered by certain towns, the peril from air raids was not, in fact, serious for PW until Southern Italy became the theatre of military operations. In July 1943, the Italian Red Cross informed the Committee of the deaths of thirteen PW said to have been machine-gunned while working in the fields. This incident was reported to the British Red Cross. At this time the Committee was being questioned by several Allied Red Cross Societies as to the localities where their PW nationals were interned. As the Italian Government, in December 1941, had reverted to the numbering of camps², the Committee was only able, on account of the attitude of the British authorities, to inform the Red Cross

¹ The United States Government was however opposed to the disclosure of locations of camps under its control in Italy and North Africa.

² The British Red Cross Society, which frequently had information on the geographical position of certain camps in Italy, sent several enquiries to the ICRC for the location of camps corresponding to certain given numbers. The Committee could not, however, give the information owing to the decision of Italian Government.

Societies that, as reported by the Italian Information Bureau, the PW camps were at a satisfactory distance from the fighting areas. This information was apparently confirmed by events. With the exception of an air attack upon a train carrying PW that caused many casualties, and the bombardment of a camp situated at Mantua, both in 1944, no other cases of the kind were reported to the Committee.

When air attack over Germany became intensified, the Committee was faced with another difficult problem, that of the use of PW employed for non-combatant anti-aircraft defence and rescue work during air raids. This question specially concerned the PW working in industry and those, in particular, who were employed on work prohibited by Art. 31 of the Convention. On several occasions, in 1942, the Committee had received complaints from camp leaders to the effect that PW were obliged to continue working, or to help with rescue during air raids. The German High Command, when approached on the matter, stated that PW were only required to carry out defence work for their own camp quarters during raids, and requested that they should be informed of any infractions of the rule which came to the notice of the Committee's delegates.

Breaches of the rule grew to such a number that, at the beginning of 1944, they became the greatest cause of anxiety to PW working in industrial concerns and provoked their chief protest. These men who won praise, on all hands, for their humane efforts to help the German people under air bombardment, considered that it was against their military code to risk their lives for the sole protection of the Detaining Power's property.

In April 1944, the Committee was informed of a ruling by the German High Command, authorizing employers in industry to put PW on to anti-aircraft defence in the factories where they were employed, even during an alert. The Committee's delegates protested to the responsible Authorities, but at each encounter met the reply that the same regulations applied to German civilians, and that in comparison, the PW were in no worse case. The Committee then sent a note direct to the German Foreign Office in June 1944, drawing attention to the minimum protec-

tion to which PW were entitled by Art. 7 of the Convention in the following terms :

“ The ICRC considers that the employment of PW on non-combatant anti-aircraft defence is not a contravention of security guarantees, if such action is restricted to the defence of the prisoners' own quarters. Clearly such employment, even though it prove dangerous, is in the men's own interests and is in apparent conformity with Art. 10¹ of the 1929 Convention. Non-combatant anti-aircraft defence work required from PW outside their own quarters, however, is undoubtedly a service for the benefit of the Detaining Power, and falls within the scope of the terms of the Convention, Art. 32 of which prohibits employment of PW on dangerous work and lays down the principle of safety measures in these cases. It cannot be denied that some non-combatant anti-aircraft defence work is dangerous in itself, for instance that of fire-service, air wardens, attention to unexploded or delayed action bombs, etc. The Committee is therefore of the opinion that the Detaining Power should abstain from employing PW on dangerous non-combatant anti-aircraft defence work which is not for the protection of their own quarters.”

Although this letter met with no reply, it determined the Committee's policy once and for all with regard to the question, and its delegates therefore continued, whenever possible, to intervene with camp commandants in behalf of PW employed on non-combatant anti-aircraft defence of industrial plants.

In 1944, concern with the grave problem of these PW had however to give place to a question which, owing to the intensified bombing of Germany, now formed the main anxiety of the Committee—that of the bombing of camps.

The Committee began to receive complaints direct from camp leaders on this score in 1943. At first it seemed that these unfortunate occurrences were due above all to the fact that these camps were situated in the suburbs of large industrial towns which were the objectives for enemy night-bombing ².

¹ Sec. 2 of this Article lays down that the Detaining Power shall take all precautions against the danger of fire.

² The Committee learnt also, in 1943, that 275 French PW had been killed during the bombing of Nuremberg on April 14, 1943, by a direct hit on their shelter, and that in May the effects of the bombing of the Mohn barrage had caused seventy-nine casualties amongst French PW in a neighbouring camp.

From 1944 onwards, the complaints became more numerous and showed that some camps, even those situated in the open country away from any military objectives, were being bombed or machine-gunned, and that these attacks usually affected camps for prisoners neither American nor British. It was to be feared, therefore, that the attacking force was not adequately informed as to the location of all the PW camps in Germany.

In these circumstances, and in view of the increasing number of casualties amongst PW from air raids which were brought to its notice, the Committee decided in 1944 to renew its efforts for the location and marking of camps¹. Just as it was about to approach the belligerents concerned, it received a request from the British Government to be informed immediately of all camps that had been moved in Germany and the exact location of the new camps. The Committee took this opportunity to refer to its previous efforts, and requested the British authorities to reconsider their decision of 1940. The reply received from London seemed to indicate that an agreement had been reached on the subject between the British and German Governments; the Committee therefore at once telegraphed to its London and Berlin Delegations to forward the camp locations without delay, and in particular to make a point of recalling to the two belligerents the proposals it had made with regard to marking. It learned, however, in September that the agreement which was being negotiated through the Protecting Power was far from completion. The British authorities declared they were willing to give all relevant geographical details, but no similar declaration on this occasion came from the German authorities. The Germans persisted in their silence, and although approached on several occasions by the Committee, no response was vouchsafed.

The Committee was the more disappointed by the breakdown in these negotiations, as it remained powerless to give

¹ Already in March 1944, in the Memorandum on hospital localities and safety zones, addressed to the Governments of belligerent States, the Committee had drawn attention to the special case of PW. It stated that it would be expedient to study the possibility of placing certain categories of PW in the safety zones which might be established for certain classes of civilians.

satisfactory replies to enquiries of Allied Red Cross Societies on the location of certain camps in Germany. The requests for information mounted when the German Authorities began to transfer camps to suit their military operations and adopted a new series of numbers for those in areas near the fighting zone.

It may be pointed out that already in 1944, the Committee was of the opinion that mutual notification of camp locations was of less importance than marking for the successful protection of PW¹. Henceforth it concentrated its chief efforts on marking. Several events encouraged it in that course. The method had recently been put into practice in Italy where, in the early summer of 1944, the commandant of Camp 339, Mantua, in full agreement with the PW themselves, had arranged for the huts to be painted with red and white stripes, and had requested the Committee to inform the Allied Powers of this marking. Although the German Government objected to the communication of the markings, their use apparently protected the camp from daylight attacks².

In December 1944, the British Government accepted the marking of camps in principle and on a condition of reciprocity, the practical details to be worked out by agreement. The Belgian Government, in February 1945, transmitted to the Committee a request from Belgian PW in Germany that the letters "PW" or "POW" should be displayed on camp buildings, and that their suggestions should be placed before the Powers concerned.

The urgent appeals made by the Committee to the German Government in November 1944 and February 1945 having received no reply, it again took up the question a month later when communicating the Belgian request, in spite of the fact

¹ It seemed to the Committee that there should be a system of daylight marking restricted to camps in which there were food reserves and relief consignments for PW, but that the numerous labour detachments should not be included, as this would have raised practical difficulties. As to the marking to be adopted, the Committee proposed, in the absence of agreement on a special mark provided by Art. 5 of the Ninth Hague Convention, i.e. two stiff rectangular panels divided along one diagonal into two triangles, the upper black and the lower white.

² This camp was, however, bombed and machine-gunned on several occasions during night raids, fortunately without great losses.

that it had been informed by its delegation in Germany that the High Command clearly was not in favour of such marking. The efforts of the Committee met with the general agreement, in principle, of the British and French Governments, but its appeals to the German Authorities, although pursued to the end, were in vain.

Between November 1943 and the end of the fighting in Europe, the Committee received reports of about thirty PW camps in Germany or in occupied France that had been bombed or machine-gunned. Most of the camps were situated in the Rhine valley or neighbouring country. To the knowledge of the Committee about a thousand PW lost their lives in this way¹.

On all occasions, the information received regarding bombing, either from the Berlin Delegation or more often from camp leaders themselves, was regularly transmitted by the Committee to the Powers concerned. Further, it always saw to it that its delegates visited the camps at the earliest opportunity to assist PW who had suffered from the attacks and who, very often, were gravely shaken by the experience; in other cases the delegates were instructed to replace immediately, if necessary, stocks of clothing or parcels which had been destroyed.

The Committee's delegates in Germany also paid increasing attention to the problem of safety precautions for prisoners, when the threats of air attack increased. They made especially urgent requests to camp authorities that PW should be allowed access to civilian air raid shelters in an emergency, and that they should not, as too often happened, be confined to their quarters during raids.

It may also be recalled that in the spring of 1945, when mass evacuations of prisoners were being made in Germany, the Committee was advised on three occasions that parties of PW on the march had been machine-gunned by Allied aircraft. That is, perhaps, one of the most tragic examples of air warfare, blindly carried out, from which the ICRC made unwearied efforts to protect PW.

¹ This figure only applies to cases reported to the Committee, and it is not therefore possible to give even an approximate idea of the number of prisoners killed in Germany through air raids.

The question of protecting prisoners from the dangers of air attacks in the Far East also caused the Committee much anxiety. It must be remembered, however, that in this particular theatre of war the Committee's work as regards protection of PW was carried out under very unusual conditions, and was greatly hampered by the handicaps imposed on it.

The efforts made by the Committee since 1942 to obtain details regarding the location of camps in Japan and in the territories under Japanese control, were guided chiefly by their desire to alleviate the anxiety of relatives who wished to know where particular prisoners were interned. It also required this information for its own use, as the Japanese authorities, together with the other belligerents in the Far East, had dropped cipher camp addresses, and now gave no more than the general geographical position of a group of several camps. Identification of any particular camp then became very difficult. The Japanese Government had stated, as early as 1943, that they were not prepared to supply the additional information required. They confirmed that decision after a further approach by the Committee, and announced that camp locations would only be indicated in the most general fashion. Notice of camp locations given in this form could do nothing to increase the safety of PW from the perils of air attacks.

In March 1944, however, the Committee sent to the Japanese Authorities its Memorandum on the creation of hospital localities and safety zones. The note, it will be recalled, mentioned the possibility of including certain categories of PW for shelter within such zones. The Japanese Authorities declined, just as most of the other Governments concerned had done, and the plan had therefore to be dropped.

For PW under Japanese control, however, the danger of air warfare did not become really serious until the spring of 1945. The Committee then reminded its Far East delegations of the necessity for their careful inspection of the equipment and facilities available in camps to meet attacks from the air. Delegations were also instructed to observe whether distinctive markings, recognizable from above, had been placed on hut roofings, a practice which, according to information received by

the British authorities, had been adopted for certain camps. It appeared from the reports of the delegations in the Far East that in respect of the first point, the measures taken were not always adequate. There was, too, a complete neglect of the marking of camps. A more serious question then arose, the attitude of the Japanese Authorities with regard to camp location. There were grounds for fear that many camps were situated near plants which might be considered as a military objectives, and statements made by the American State Department implied that some camps had been transferred to the neighbourhood of such buildings¹. It has already been explained, in connection with the European theatre of war, why any intervention of the Committee in this field was a difficult and even delicate affair. The problem for it was still greater in Japan, where the authorities met all questions touching the bombing of PW camps with suspicion and silence. For instance, the Committee had not been able to persuade the Japanese Official Bureau that the deaths of PW through air raids should be specially recorded on death certificates sent to its delegates. When delegates in Japan were notified of the bombing of camps, and particularly those for civilian internees, the Committee could not obtain details as to the number of victims of the attacks.

In these conditions, the Committee felt compelled again to bring the whole question of protection of PW before the Japanese Government. It decided to do so verbally this time, to escape the serious drawbacks of discussing so complex a matter by cable. The Committee's delegate who left Geneva for Japan in June 1945 had therefore special instructions to draw the attention of the Japanese authorities to the question of camp markings and location. The bombardment of Hiroshima, which occurred three days after the delegate's arrival in Tokyo, and

¹ In its reply to the Belgian proposal for the marking of camps, which had particular reference, it is true to the European theatre of war, the United States Government wrote in July 1945, that in its opinion, the use of distinctive marking did not ensure for the internees in the Far East a protection greater than that which would have been theirs if the Japanese Authorities observed faithfully the obligations imposed by Art. 9, Sec. 4, of the Convention.

the subsequent capitulation of Japan took away the purpose of these instructions.

Shortly after the bombing of Hiroshima, several Red Cross Societies enquired of the Committee whether any PW camps were situated near that town at the time of the bombing. The Committee were fortunately able to reassure them on the strength of the information received from its representatives.

(B). PROTECTION OF PRISONERS TRANSPORTED BY SEA

Amongst the more striking deficiencies in the Convention there was one which troubled the ICRC especially, and which it brought to the notice of the belligerent Governments without delay, one of its recognized privileges being to initiate such measures in the humanitarian field. This defect related to the safety to which PW are entitled when they are moved from one place to another by sea.

During 1941, the extension of the war zones, the widely dispersed theatres of war and the mobility of the armies led the belligerents, for various reasons, to set about extensive transfers of PW, usually by sea. New factors arose during these operations which were likely to make these transfers become dangerous for PW. Not only had the use of modern weapons, such as the submarine and aeroplane, increased greatly since the last war, and their field of action widened to vast dimensions; the special methods of combat which their use involves made it, for instance, impossible for the belligerents to exercise their right of search in ships, to identify them precisely or to recognize the nature of the cargo. These conditions increased the likelihood of blunders occurring, e.g. the torpedoing or bombing of ships carrying PW. This state of affairs was not only contrary to the spirit of the Conventions, but had also an especially painful side since, contrary to the intentions and interests of both sides, it might bring about cruel and useless losses amongst service-men, who as PW could no longer take any part in the war.

This new situation having become acute, the Committee gave close study to this distressing problem, which it hoped to

help in solving, in the common interest of all belligerents. At that very time, some thousands of PW and civilian internees had met a tragic death from attacks by their own countrymen. This number was estimated at some 10,000 at the time of the last intervention of the Committee. According to information that came through after the end of the war, at least 15,000 PW and civilian internees were killed or drowned during their transport by sea, as a result of submarine attacks.

Clearly, the 1929 Convention should be supplemented by more explicit and more precise provisions, in relation to the safety of PW during their transport by sea. The only principles governing such protection are too general, though quite categorical, and they do not apply with sufficient accuracy to this matter. The Convention, in Art. 7 and 9, provides in particular that, "PW shall be evacuated to depots sufficiently removed from the fighting zone for them to be out of danger"; that "PW shall not be unnecessarily exposed to danger, whilst awaiting evacuation from a fighting zone" (Art. 7); and that no PW may "at any time be sent to an area where he would be exposed to the fire of the fighting zone" (Art. 9).

On the ground of these various Articles, PW lodged frequent complaints with the ICRC concerning the fact that the waters which they had to cross had been declared war zones by the belligerents, a fact which might bring about an attack and the destruction of any vessel discovered in them.

On February 24, 1942, the ICRC made three suggestions to the States concerned, i.e. Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, United States, as follows :

(1) As regards practical measures, we are certain that the military authorities of each country already endeavour to ensure that the transport by sea of PW and civilian internees is accompanied by all safety measures at present in use, e.g. an adequate number of lifeboats and lifebelts, and as far as possible, escort by vessels able, in case of need, to pick up the shipwrecked.

It appears to the Committee that it could only be of advantage if such measures were to become general and be applied in a systematic

manner. We should be very glad to know the measures decided on by your Government in this matter.

(2) From the legal point of view, it seems possible to reach a more complete solution of the problem by agreements amongst belligerents, for instance, by adopting some form of special marking to be determined, which would indicate to the opposing forces the presence of PW or civilian internees on board transport vessels, and which would at the same time debar the carrying of any war supplies or armed forces, beyond those required for guarding the prisoners.

In addition, vessels sailing under the safeguard of this marking would be deemed unarmed, and could not in any circumstance take part in offensive or defensive operations. Such vessels would remain subject to capture.

This special marking would obviously not be an emblem of immunity, but would represent a simple means of recognition for the opposing party. This party would then avoid all action likely to imperil the lives of its own nationals.

(3) Finally, the ICRC begs to urge the belligerent States not to have recourse to the transfer by sea of prisoners or civilian internees, in so far as circumstances allow, except for imperative reasons, and when it does not seem possible to find a place of detention for them, or some less dangerous means of evacuation.

As the ICRC was well aware of the practical difficulties in the way of giving effect to these proposals, it sought the opinion of the Governments on this subject.

Without going into detail of the replies received from the Governments, the various trends they showed may be pointed out. To begin with, certain Powers considered that they would not be called upon to send PW by sea, or declared that they left this to the care of their allies. Others thought that they would be unable to adopt the proposals of the Committee because of practical difficulties in the way of application, or because they feared their abuse. Others, again, made concrete counter-proposals—Germany, for instance, as will be seen below. Here is the substance of these replies, which are either affirmative, or negative according to the point considered :

(1) *Safety Measures.* — Most of the Powers which had had to convey PW stressed that as far as they were concerned, they took all measures proper to assure them of effective protection.

The Italian Government said this protection was identical with that which they had provided for the transport of their own troops. In addition, an escort was supplied, as far as possible, for all transports of this kind ; this escort could therefore stand by in case of any disaster.

The United States wished to make the reservation that the type of vessel used as a transport, might in certain cases exclude the carrying of safety equipment in sufficient quantity ¹. The same Government expressed doubts as to the protection afforded by these safety measures, should a disaster occur in waters off the main sea routes and far from land, for as it recorded, it was not always possible to have an escort available for these transports.

These comments serve to illustrate that in spite of the belligerents being well disposed, the practical difficulties, above all the scarcity of shipping which made it necessary to use any kind of vessel, did not always allow the PW transported to be assured of the safety which was theirs by right.

(2) *Marks of recognition.* — The display of a mark of recognition indicating that there was no armament, but not implying immunity from capture, was the subject of close study by the Powers concerned, and gave rise to some objections, the value and pertinence of which must be recognized. These objections turned on the degree to which the mark of recognition fulfilled its purpose, on the dangers to which its display might expose the vessel, and on the abuses to which its use might lead.

As to the degree to which the marking fulfilled its purpose, Great Britain and the United States expressed the opinion that the presence on board of prisoner fellow-countrymen would not necessarily prevent an attack : the attacking force might in certain circumstances, prefer to destroy an enemy vessel, whatever the consequences for the PW on board.

As regards the dangers to which the display of the marking might give rise, these Governments and the Italian Government pointed out that, should the transport happen to encounter

¹ This reservation had only a temporary bearing on the subject, as the U.S. Government, in a later statement, made known new measures of precaution it had taken. (See below).

enemy surface ships, this marking would invite them to attack it, as they would know it to be defenceless. To guard against this risk, an armed escort would be necessary, and as the escort would undoubtedly go into action in case of attacks, this would imperil the safety of the PW. Moreover, the mark of recognition would have to be lighted up by night, which might reveal the presence and position of the convoy to the enemy.

Great Britain, Italy and the Netherlands raised the point that the comparative immunity conferred on vessels displaying the marking might lead to abuses. There would be the risk of a belligerent making use of the mark to cover the transport of troops or of war material, or for ensuring the safety of a supply ship returning empty. This temptation would be all the greater, since there would be less reason to fear being stopped and examined by an enemy surface ship. The Committee was assured from another quarter that the presence of a few dozen prisoners on board would in fact suffice to justify the display of the mark of recognition, and to spare this vessel from attack by submarine or aircraft

(3) *Reduction to a minimum of transport of prisoners by sea.* — The recommendation made by the Committee to restrict to a minimum the transport of PW and civilian internees by sea was generally approved. The Italian Government declared, in this connexion, that for reasons of safety it gave preference as a rule to the transport of PW over land, circumstances permitting.

(4) *Other objections and comments.* — The attention of the Committee was furthermore drawn to the fact that the rapid evacuation of prisoners sometimes called for recourse to improvised means or to the use of warships, which would preclude employing the mark of recognition.

A question of quite another kind was presented to the Committee by the U.S. Government ; would vessels escorting the transport be authorized to defend it against an attack, should it occur ? In the sense of the Committee's proposals, it was quite certain that the escort would be free to take such measures

as seemed most expedient to guard the transport from any attempted capture. The United States presumed moreover that the reply would be in the affirmative.

Canada, Great Britain and the Netherlands expressed their doubts of the value of such regulations. They feared that they would be often contravened, which would have the result of weakening their effect and cause them to be abandoned. They referred on this score to the numerous violations of the immunity of hospital-ships reported during the war. They feared that propaganda might seize upon facts of this kind, if the assailant disregarded regulations, and that the disputes which might arise in this connexion would be harmful, in the last resort, to the PW themselves.

Finally, the reply from Great Britain suggested, in case regulations were agreed upon, a limitation in the number of vessels bearing the mark of recognition, and to introduce the supervision of their use by the delegates of the Committee.

The German Government, responding in quite a different way, declared in a communication to the Committee dated August 31, 1942, their readiness to apply the following provisions, subject to reciprocity :

The belligerent Powers are authorized to use for the transport by sea of PW and civilian internees the vessels specified in Arts. 1, 2 and 3 of the Tenth Hague Convention of October 18, 1907 (for the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention), without the rights of belligerents deriving from this Convention in respect of these vessels being modified. These vessels shall also enjoy the protection provided by the said Convention when PW or civilian internees are on board. PW and civilian internees shall not, as far as possible, be transported by sea, except by means of this nature.

The Italian Government submitted to the countries with which it was at war a proposal involving reciprocal notification of the main distinguishing features of vessels assigned for the transport of PW and civilian internees, and of the route to be taken on each voyage.

Without awaiting a reply from all the Powers to whom its first circular letter had been sent, the Committee informed the

principal Powers concerned of the wording of the counter-proposal made by Germany.

Two replies relating to this counter-proposal were received by the Committee. Both of these turned it down for practical considerations, in particular because the number of hospital-ships would be too small to ensure the conveyance of all PW.

In these circumstances, there seemed little hope of arriving at any satisfactory means of regulating the transport of PW by sea.

The Committee, however, bearing in mind the objections made, was still persuaded that it was possible to meet them by taking into account the suggestions and counter-proposals made. Impelled moreover by the increasing loss of life amongst PW conveyed by sea, the Committee approached yet again the belligerents most directly concerned, by letter of August 10, 1943. In this letter the point was raised in particular of the need to distinguish between the transfers carried out of necessity by sea between the zone of operations and the transit camp, and those based on long-term practical reasons. The Committee proposed that in the second case, PW should either be interned on the same continent where they had been captured, or immediately transferred. It laid stress once more on the need for developing to the maximum degree all safety measures (safety equipment, escorts etc.). It also considered whether an attempt should not still be made to bring about a formal agreement between the belligerents, based either on the display of a distinguishing mark, or notification of the route to be followed by the transports, or the putting on board of supervisory officials, or the use of any other adequate system which might be suggested.

As a result of this second approach, the ICRC received a reply of some importance from Washington, which greeted favourably two of the clauses put forward. First, the Committee was assured that the safety equipment, apart from lifebelts, was calculated on a basis of 125 per cent of the personnel embarked, and that exceptions to this principle would be made only in case of urgent necessity; secondly, the United States Government would consider further the suggestion to let PW remain on the same continent where they had been captured, in so far as military considerations allowed.

Great Britain, speaking also for the Dominions, adopted as to the second point raised, a similar attitude in its reply.

On the other hand, the other proposals were turned down by the United States. For reasons of security they were against any notification of the route to be followed. Moreover, they discarded the proposal to give vessels assigned for the transport of PW a distinguishing mark of recognition, as well as that for putting on board neutral supervisory officials, because of the lack of vessels which could be allocated exclusively for this transport work.

In face of the opposition to its proposals shown by some of the belligerents, and in the absence of a reply from the Japanese Government, the Committee decided not to persist in its suggestions. It remained satisfied with the partial success yielded by the assurances given by Great Britain, Italy and the United States. All the Governments and the National Red Cross Societies were informed of the whole course of this action in a Memorandum circulated in 1944. This paper may be referred to in order to study or rebut the criticisms and objections presented to the Committee by some of the Powers directly concerned.

Despite the importance of the objections which were raised and their unquestionable weight, the Committee held that the problems presented by the laying down of more precise regulations are not insoluble. Indeed, the principal difficulties encountered were the result of temporary and special conditions. Without deprecating the numerous problems which would be raised by introducing the arrangements suggested, the Committee cannot resist the conclusion that the safety of PW transported by sea is not adequately ensured by the 1929 Convention, and that an improvement in this regard should be a serious aim.

In concluding the account of this part of its work during the World War, the Committee can only recall the fact that at least 15,000 PW and civilian internees were lost at sea, as a result of attacks blindly carried out on the ships transporting them.

V. Employment of Prisoners of War

(A). INTRODUCTION

The work done by PW has high value for the Detaining Power, since it makes a substantial contribution to its economic resources. The PW's home country has to reckon that the work so done increases the war potential of its enemy, may be indirectly : and yet at the same time it is to its own profit that its nationals should return home at the end of hostilities in the best possible state of health. Work under normal conditions is a valuable antidote to the trials of captivity, and helps PW to preserve their bodily health and morale.

For this reason the principles governing work done by PW, established by the Institute of International Law in its " Oxford Manual ", and reasserted in Art. 6 and 7 of the Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of 1907, were the subject of numerous directives in all the belligerent countries in the first World War. These principles formed the basis of the texts codified by the Convention of July 27, 1929.

On many occasions during the second World War, the ICRC had to intervene to secure observance of these terms of the Convention.

As the war developed, these interventions necessarily grew in number ; first of all in Germany, in behalf of French PW ; later, in the interests of German PW in France, in occupied Germany, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. The conclusion of the Armistice between France and Germany in June 1940, in releasing German PW, deprived the Convention of the principle of reciprocity which gives the essential guarantee

of faithful application of its provisions. That guarantee was lacking until France entered the war again in the North African campaign. Germany was in the same case after the end of the fighting in 1945. On both these occasions PW were deprived of even the good offices of a Protecting Power, and it fell to the ICRC to undertake unaided the task of enforcing respect for the humanitarian Conventions.

Moreover, economic stringency and the necessity to provide substitutes for imported goods in countries feeling the effects of the blockade, like Germany, or in those deprived of their stocks without means of immediate replacement, like France in 1945, made it more difficult for these countries to observe their treaty obligations concerning the maintenance of PW.

From these details it will be clear that the ICRC was chiefly called upon to take action in Germany and France. The rules governing the employment of PW were in the main, more strictly observed in such countries as Great Britain and the United States. Still, it is true that even in these two countries, or in territories occupied by them, as well as in belligerent countries as a whole, the ICRC had fairly often to intervene with insistence to secure observance of this or that clause of the Convention on the employment of PW.

It is not possible within the scope of this Report to mention every case in which the ICRC took action, either by direct approach to Governments or through the day-to-day activities of its delegates in their dealings with civil and military authorities.

We shall limit ourselves to typical instances, where intervention had particularly important results. These were in cases of abuses in the employment of PW, especially in the mines and on prohibited work, or on tasks which were dangerous or detrimental to health, as in the clearance of minefields. There was also the matter of insufficient rations allowed to PW engaged on heavy manual labour.

Other points relating to PW work covered by the provisions of the Convention, e.g. the employment of officers and NCOs, and insurance against accidents at work, did not call for such frequent and urgent steps on the part of the Committee. The

latter has nevertheless kept a careful record of all such steps, and the following is a brief account of the facts which the Committee now has under consideration for the revision of the 1929 Convention.

(B). ABUSES CONNECTED WITH PRISONERS' COMPULSORY
WORK

Art. 29 and 30 of the Convention state :

Art. 29 : No prisoner of war may be employed on work for which he is physically unsuited.

Art. 30 : The duration of the daily work of prisoners of war, including the time of the journey to and from work, shall not be excessive and shall in no case exceed that permitted for civil workers of the locality employed on the same work. Each prisoner shall be allowed a rest of 24 consecutive hours each week, preferably on Sunday.

Germany. — One of the clearest cases of violation of these provisions was that of " shadow gangs ". This term originally applied not to a detachment of PW, but to the small number of German workers employed by camp commandants, or more usually by civil employers, side by side with PW when the latter had to do overtime or Sunday work. Later, the term came to be applied to the PW themselves and meant the whole detachment. It is important to observe that these practices were contrary to the orders of the German High Command. The Committee's delegates saw " shadow gangs " at work, for instance, in various detachments of Stalag 1 A at Stablack. They reported these cases to the German High Command, which opened an inquiry and ordered that in no case should prisoners be forced to work longer hours than German civilians.

Amongst all the interventions made by the ICRC, the most persistent were those in behalf of PW working in the mines. The Committee's delegates, when they found especially flagrant disregard for humane rights, had no hesitation in making such emphatic protests that, at times, they even risked their own

position. One of the delegates had even to be recalled in 1943, when his fully justified protests against the inhuman treatment of prisoners in the Silesian mines made him fall foul of the responsible authorities.

Labour Detachment No. F. 151 at Gleiwitz (Stalag VIII B) was housed at a pithead surrounded by tall factory buildings which gave off noxious gases. The men never left their quarters except to go down the mine. The German workers and even the sentries were quartered outside the area of the pithead buildings. Similar unsatisfactory conditions of work in the Marga and Victoria 3 mines at Seftenberg and in Mine 171 at Seydlitz (Stalag B, Fürstenwald) were reported by the Berlin delegation. In Labour Detachment Settens 2/351 of Stalag IV C at Wistritz, forty-four French prisoners employed in a mine had to do one and a half hours daily overtime more than the German workers, and also on Sunday morning, when the Germans had the day off. In the coal-handling Labour Detachments of Stalag 344 at Lamsdorf, the prisoners did heavy manual work for ten and eleven hours per day. At Stalag X A (Labour Detachment at Hemmingsted) out of twenty Belgian prisoners who worked in a mine during 1942 and 1943, nineteen fell sick.

These cases were brought to the notice of the German High Command by the Berlin delegate. He insisted that work in the mines should have been imposed only on those who were miners by trade, and pointed out that many PW put on to this work lacked technical knowledge, a fact that led to accidents. This was the case with the British workers of Stalag VIII B working in vertical fissures, known as "Pfeiler", where, on account of the risk from falls of rock, even the German miners refused to work.

Referring to his previous complaints concerning conditions in the mines, the Committee's delegate in Berlin, acting on special instructions from Geneva, suggested on October 2, 1944, that all PW over 45 years of age, without distinction of nationality, should be exempt from such work, and that those who had been engaged on it for three years should be taken off. The High Command replied that there was no age-limit for PW working

in the mines, but that such men were under constant medical supervision and replaced when no longer physically fit. It was also agreed that investigation officers should be appointed to verify abuses reported by the delegation. When these officers had confirmed that the complaints were warranted, the working conditions of the men were improved.

France. — In 1945, the Committee's delegate at Lyons was called upon to intervene, on instructions from Geneva, in behalf of some German prisoners, who although they were sick, as confirmed by the camp doctor, were obliged to work at the Ugine steelworks. In the Labour Detachment working in the Blanzey mines at Montceau-les-Mines (Depot 82), PW whose output was insufficient, or who were regarded as recalcitrant were put on double-shift, which meant that they had to do two regulation shifts without rest. Thus, some men were working below the surface for nineteen hours a day without food ; this moreover, occurred three and four times a week. According to the statement of the mines doctor himself, sick men were sent down the mine as a collective punishment. The situation in this labour detachment was so grave that the visiting delegate made a special report on it, apart from his immediate personal representations to the Regional Commandant. This, and other similar cases induced the principal official responsible for the administration of prisoners of war in France to travel to Geneva and discuss with the Committee the subject of their working conditions. During these talks the Committee requested and obtained an undertaking that henceforth PW should be placed under employers who could be trusted to handle men protected by an international Convention.

Belgium. — The Committee's delegation at Brussels reported that at many camps, in particular at Waterschei and Zwartberg, PW physically unfit through wounds, sickness or other disabilities, or by reason of their age (16 to 17 years or over 60 years) were being employed in the mines. The delegation made a point of reporting the case to the responsible authority. This step, coupled with complaints made by camp leaders resulted in the

exemption from mining work of men under 18 or over 60 years of age, and the admission to hospital of sick or wounded for treatment.

(C). PROHIBITED, UNHEALTHY, OR DANGEROUS WORK

The Convention states :

Art. 31 : Work done by prisoners of war shall have no direct connection with the operations of war. In particular, it is forbidden to employ prisoners in the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind, or on the transport of material destined for combatant units.

Art. 32 : It is forbidden to employ prisoners of war on unhealthy or dangerous work.

Germany. — It appears that a considerable number of PW were employed in armament factories. The Committee's delegates frequently received complaints from prisoners on this score, in the course of their visits to camps and camp hospitals. The Committee also received protests from National Red Cross Societies and other relief organizations.

In August 1942, the Committee, referring to Art. 31, drew the attention of the German Foreign Office to the various violations noted by its delegates and asked this department to have these allegations investigated. In March 1945, the Berlin delegation repeatedly made strong protest to the Foreign Office against the alleged forced employment of PW of Stalag III B in loading bombs into aircraft. The protests were reinforced by direct representations made by the Committee. The delegation also took its complaints to the High Command when Polish and Yugoslav prisoners, organized into "Schanz-Kommandos" were employed in large numbers towards the end of the war on the transport of munitions to the fighting zone.

The participation of PW in anti-aircraft defence created a new problem, which gave rise to contradictory orders on the part of the German authorities. The High Command finally issued orders, which it notified to the Committee, adding a

request that any infringements should be reported to it. As a result of interviews with the Committee's delegation, the German authorities decided that PW should not be called upon to take part in air-raid defence work except after an attack had started, and then only in the protection of their own quarters. Further, prisoners were to be provided with steel helmets and respirators for this work.

Having observed that PW employed in chemical factories had contracted serious illnesses due to slow poisoning, the Committee's delegation proposed to the High Command that a system of periodical reliefs should be arranged for men compelled to do such work. This was granted, and reliefs were also arranged for the men at Stalag 18 C at Markt Pongau, who were working in a hydraulic caisson and had complained of rheumatism. It also succeeded in getting leather boots issued to Belgian prisoners in Labour Detachment No. 27021 GW at Gartenau, near Salzburg. These men were employed in a hillside quarry, and the heavy wooden clogs they had to wear impeded them when they had to move quickly to take shelter from falls of rock.

France. — The most important matter that required the intervention of the Committee with the French Authorities was the clearing of minefields. Employment on the removing of mines and other explosive devices constitutes, during hostilities, prohibited work under Art. 31. When hostilities are at an end, such work is subject to the prohibitions laid down in Art. 32. In spite of these provisions it was decided after the capitulation of the Italian and German Forces in North Africa, in May 1943, that PW should be set to work on the clearing of minefields. The Committee's delegate at Algiers, on receiving a complaint, duly verified, from the German camp leader in Camp 16 at Tunis, took the matter up with the responsible authority. He quoted not only Art. 32 of the Convention, but also Art. 82, which forbids belligerents to condone breaches by private agreements. His legal arguments were not admitted, but he did obtain the concession that only men who had served as sappers should in future be put on the work of clearing mines.

The problem arose in an acute form in France at the beginning of 1945. The press seized upon the matter and declared that mines should be cleared by those who had planted them. The Committee, true to its purely humanitarian principles, avoided all controversy and also refrained from putting forward mere legal arguments concerning the observance of treaties. It explained to the French administration the dangers of work on mine-clearing in the hands of men who had no technical training. In September 1945, the French War Ministry itself estimated the number of mines to be cleared in France at about a hundred million. The monthly rate of fatal accidents among German prisoners engaged on this work was two thousand, i.e. one death per five thousand mines. It followed that if mine-clearing continued under these conditions, it threatened to involve the deaths of twenty thousand men. The Committee urged the necessity of adopting safety precautions, which it set forth in detail. It then instructed its delegates to give particular attention to their observation. In all cases where these measures were carried out, the accident-rate decreased almost to nil.

Germany. — The Committee had to act in behalf of German prisoners in the hands of the French and American Occupation Forces who were obliged to work on mine-clearing and in handling munitions. Following a fatal accident the Committee instructed its delegations at Baden-Baden and Frankfurt to propose to the detaining Authorities that they should adopt the same safety measures as had been successfully suggested in France. This was done.

Czechoslovakia. — Civilian internees were employed on mine-clearing. The Committee's delegation at Bratislava succeeded in having this stopped.

U.S.A. — The Committee's delegates had frequently to bring to notice cases of the employment of PW on unhealthy or dangerous work. At Livingstone Camp (Houma Labour Detachment) 190 men were working on sugar-plantations in a tropical climate and exposed to the sun all day. At the Gordon

Johnstone Camp, Florida, prisoners of the Eglin Labour Detachment had to clear an area of ground infested with poisonous snakes. At Atterbury Camp (Indiana), prisoners were employed at a nitrogen plant. The Committee's delegation, supported by the camp doctor himself, asked for an inquiry which led to the taking of the safety measures laid down for such workers. The same remarks apply to Corpus Christi Camp (Texas), where prisoners were engaged on melting down aluminium scrap.

(D). INSUFFICIENCY OF RATIONS ISSUED
TO PRISONERS COMPELLED TO DO HEAVY MANUAL LABOUR

In general, the question of PW rations is dealt with in Art. 11, Sec. 1, of the Convention, which runs: "The food ration of prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depot troops." It is recognized, however, that men set to work must, if need be, have supplementary rations giving a minimum caloric content, without which they could not furnish the effort required. Indeed, failure to give this necessary minimum would constitute a breach of Art. 29 of the Convention, which states: "No prisoner of war may be employed on work for which he is physically unsuited."

Germany. — Here the ration allowance of men engaged on work appeared at first to be sufficient, as they received from 400 to 600 grammes of meat per week over and above the civilian ration.

But from 1942 onwards, the Berlin delegation noted that PW were given only a part of the extra rations allowed to civilians engaged on similar work. In their visits to camps throughout the duration of the war, the delegates established the fact that prisoners engaged on heavy manual work often had less than the regulation amount of extra rations. During the latter days of the war, so severe was the food-shortage that the basic daily ration averaged less than 1,350 calories, against 2,250 calories required to maintain normal health.

France. — In this country, at the same time, the food situation was also bad. The privations of PW corresponded, as in Germany, with those which in the circumstances were enforced on the civilian population. However, the rations of prisoners engaged on manual work became so clearly inadequate that the Committee had time and again to make strong protests. During the winter of 1945-1946, complaint after complaint was received. When despite the representations of its delegates, no perceptible improvement was achieved, the Committee brought the facts to the notice of the American Government, and stressed the responsibility of the United States as the capturing Power for the care of prisoners it had handed over to the French Authorities, but for whom the latter could not guarantee the standards of maintenance laid down by the Convention. The Commander-in-Chief of the American Forces then furnished the ICRC with foodstuffs taken from the stocks of the American Army in France for issue to prisoners by the Committee and the American Red Cross.

It must in all fairness be admitted that the French administration made efforts on its own account to remedy this state of affairs. In April 1946, after a member of the French Government had personally inspected a certain number of labour camps, the French Press could say: "From now on every German soldier is provided with a ration card entitling him to the same ration as allowed to a French worker on equivalent work. It follows that lumbermen are now classed as heavy manual workers, and miners receive 650 grammes of bread, wine, and extra fats".

Unfortunately, the orders of the French Government were not heeded in every district. The Committee's delegate in Paris noted that at Detachment No. 62 at Ste. Menehould, even with the extra rations supplied by the Red Cross, the food ration of prisoners engaged on work averaged about 1,400 calories only. In the Ardèche, the food controller of the Department refused PW the extra ration cards to which the ministerial order entitled them. A strong protest on the part of the delegate in Paris addressed to the "Direction Générale des Prisonniers de Guerre" had to be made before these regulations were observed.

Great Britain. — Prisoners had ample rations. During their camp visits, the Committee's delegates were satisfied that the men engaged on work everywhere received the extra rations laid down. The Committee received no direct complaint in this regard.

U.S.A. — As a slight shortage of foodstuffs occurred at the beginning of 1945, prisoners' rations were cut down. In July 1945, the Committee's delegation drew up a report showing that the average caloric value of the food ration issued to prisoners did not exceed 2,481 calories, a fact which explained their complaints of inadequate feeding. Most of them were actually employed as "heavy workers", and they should have been receiving 3,400 calories, according to the scales laid down by the U.S.A. War Department. The Kentucky Farmers' Association added its pleas to those of the Committee's delegation, pointing out that badly fed workers could not do a good day's work. The American authorities thereupon raised the ration-scale for working PW to 3,400 calories and empowered camp commandants to raise the ration to 3,700 calories for men engaged on particularly heavy labour.

(E). OTHER INTERVENTIONS BY THE ICRC

1. Work done by Officers

The Convention stipulates that officers and persons of equivalent status are not obliged to work, but that if they apply for it, the Detaining Power shall, as far as possible find "suitable" work for them (Art. 27, Sec. 2).

This clause was on the whole well observed, and the ICRC had only on rare occasions to intervene on this score. There were, however, a few cases of officers being compelled to work against their will; thus in Labour Detachment No. 1439 at Stalag X A, five officers and fifteen officer-cadets of the Rumanian army were forced to work, and one of the officers was shot out of hand for refusing. This incident was the subject

of a protest made by the Berlin delegation of the ICRC to the Foreign Office.

A certain number of German officers were employed in Great Britain and the U.S.A. They received, in addition to their army pay, the rates paid to private soldiers on the same work. In Germany also, a few officers were engaged on work, but for most of the time without any wages other than their army pay.

If officers are permitted to get "suitable" work, they also have the option to give it up at will. The Committee's delegates observed both in Germany and in the U.S.A. that this right was respected. Certain difficulties, however, arose in connection with work done by German officers held by the American forces in France. These officers, from the Vincennes and Versailles camps, had signed a three-months agreement to work. This period was extended without their consent, but at the end of a year, through the good offices of the Delegation in Paris, they were allowed to cease work and return to their camp. A similar case occurred at the Foucarville camp, near Cherbourg, where thirty-two German officers signed an undertaking to work with the American authorities in return for a promise that when their task was completed, they would be repatriated. However, when their work came to an end, they were handed to the British authorities, who did not consider themselves bound by the above promise. In the meantime, those officers of the Foucarville camp who had refused to work were repatriated. The ICRC intervened with the British and American authorities to bring about a reasonable settlement.

2. Work done by NCOs

According to the Convention (Art. 27, par. 3), "Non-commissioned officers who are prisoners of war may be compelled to undertake only supervisory work, unless they expressly request remunerative occupation".

This provision was not always respected. In Germany, Polish and Yugoslav NCOs were put to work, whilst British and American NCOs were exempt. It seemed at first that

French NCOs were also to be exempted. At Heuberg camp, near Stettin, the German authorities themselves explained the terms of the Convention on this point to the French prisoners, who had not previously been aware of their rights. Subsequently, however, following an agreement between the Germans and the Scapini Mission, French NCOs were obliged to work. In his reply to the representations made by the Berlin delegation, the Foreign Office stood upon an appeal made by the German General Staff, which urged German NCO prisoners of war to consent to work. In the U.S.A., twenty-six thousand NCOs, whose identity papers had been taken away from them in England, were obliged to work. Intervention made by the ICRC in their behalf was without avail, the men's papers having gone astray. In contrast to this, in a case similar to that of the officers at the Vincennes camp mentioned above, the Committee's delegate in Paris induced the authorities to allow the German NCOs freedom to refuse to renew an engagement to work that they had made with the American authorities.

3. Insurance of Prisoners against accidents at work

Art. 27, Sec. 4, of the Convention stipulates: "During the whole period of captivity, belligerents are required to admit prisoners of war who are victims of accidents at work to the benefits of provisions applicable to workmen of the same category under the legislation of the detaining Power..."

The ICRC was asked whether this insurance covered cases of sickness contracted during work. The reply was that, according to the minutes of the Diplomatic Conference at Geneva in 1929, this provision only covered accidents properly so-called. In the opinion of the Committee, if the industrial insurance scheme of the Detaining Power included certain illnesses under the heading of accidents at work, PW should be given the benefit of these provisions.

Frequent inquiries were received by the ICRC upon the duration of the liability mentioned in Sec. 4. It was asked whether this liability terminated with the release of the prisoner, whether the text ruled out the payment of a lump sum to the

claimant or to those deriving title from him, and whether it ruled out the payment of a pension even after release. The Paymaster-General of the French Army in North Africa put some especially pertinent queries on this subject. In the case of an accident met with in camp or in the employ of a private person, will repatriated PW not be eligible for military disablement pensions paid by their home country? The disablement having occurred in the service of nationals of the capturing Power, should the case not be settled by mutual adjustment of account between both States? If, after release, the disabled man does not return to his own country, will that country pay him a disablement pension? If not, will he have a right to legal redress against the former employer or the capturing Power?

In reply to these queries the Committee stated that two interpretations had been placed upon the first clause of Sec. 4, one taking a broad view, according to which, conditional upon reciprocity, the liability of the capturing Power for payment of disablement allowances to PW injured at work does not cease with their release and repatriation. The other interpretation was literal and to the contrary. The Committee, for its own part, favoured the broad interpretation, but added that as its opinion had no power of implementation, this was a matter for specific agreements between the States concerned.

The ICRC is anxious to find a practical solution to this problem, in its attention now being given to the revision of the Conventions.

VI. External Relations of Prisoners of War

(A). COMPLAINTS MADE BY PRISONERS

Article 42 of the Convention explicitly recognizes the right of PW to bring to the notice of the authorities of the Detaining Power complaints or petitions as to the conditions of their captivity. These complaints must be given priority of transmission. Even when they are found to be unwarranted, they shall not give rise to any punishment.

Although the ICRC is not explicitly mentioned as a body to which PW may address their complaints, it is, according to the spirit of the Convention, undoubtedly meant to be placed, in this respect, on the same footing as the Protecting Powers, in view of the great part it has played in the safeguarding of the men's interests.

As a matter of fact, the ICRC received large numbers of complaints and petitions from PW. They were conveyed to the Committee by post or through the camp leaders, who, as may be seen below, were able to talk with the delegates visiting their camps. Complaints were also passed on by next of kin, as a result of information received in prisoners' letters home. These letters from relatives came either direct to Geneva, or through their National Red Cross Society, or some other organization in their own country.

We shall here only examine the general methods of dealing with complaints addressed to the Committee, the subject matter having been dealt with in the preceding chapters on the treatment of PW and their conditions of captivity.

The right of prisoners to communicate freely with the Committee was on occasion contested by certain belligerents ; this was the subject of strong protests on the part of the Committee, which also had to take measures to ensure that complaints were not held back or delayed.

On receiving a complaint, the ICRC sought the most appropriate means in its power to put right the matter complained of, first verifying as far as possible the genuine foundation of the grievance. In this connection, the position of the Committee differs essentially from that of a Protecting Power. In virtue of its mandate from the State whose interests it had to safeguard, the Protecting Power usually limited its action to communicating to that State such complaints as it received, and was apparently specifically instructed to take no other course. The belligerent State, if it thought fit, would then instruct the Protecting Power to make representations on its behalf to the Detaining Power. The Committee, on the other hand, was completely free to take any action which it might deem suitable, and by whatever means seemed best.

The Committee was more concerned with finding some practical remedy for the deficiencies complained of than with bringing them to the notice of the government of the PW's own country, as there was always a possible risk of provoking reprisals. In some cases, it made immediate representations, usually to the person or officials of the Detaining Power directly concerned, but sometimes also to higher authority. In other cases it instructed its delegates to take appropriate steps on the spot to bring about an improvement. These constant daily efforts, though often never heard of, are probably among the most useful services that the Committee was able to render to PW.

(B). RELATIONS OF THE ICRC WITH CAMP LEADERS ¹

During the Franco-German war of 1870, the Prisoners of War Agency set up at Basle under the auspices of the ICRC

¹ Also called : men of confidence, PW representatives, or spokesmen.

had already suggested to the military authorities of the two countries that in each PW camp one of the men should be appointed as a "man of confidence", to be responsible for the distribution of relief.

But it was during the 1914-1918 war that the institution of camp leaders became a reality. In the early months of the war, mutual aid societies were formed in some of the French PW camps in Germany, for the benefit of men not in receipt of parcels. This was done with the approval of the camp commandants. Following on a suggestion made by the French Red Cross that this practice should be extended, the German Government, in July 1915, authorized the formation of a mutual aid society and a relief fund in each camp. At the same time, the Committee wrote to camp commandants and took up the idea of "men of confidence" being chosen from amongst the prisoners, in order to receive and distribute relief. This soon became the practice in most of the camps, and the term "man of confidence" gained currency.

The bilateral agreements made between the belligerents in the first World War to define certain issues of the treatment of PW, provide for the setting up of a Relief Committee in each camp or labour detachment consisting of more than one hundred men of the same nationality; this Committee was to be chosen freely by the prisoners from among themselves, and furthermore, in each detachment of more than ten men a freely elected "man of confidence", or leader was to be appointed, to act as correspondent with the relief committee established in the main camp.

The 1929 Convention developed and gave sanction to these previously established practices. Art. 43 and 44 make PW representatives (camp leaders) responsible for receiving and distributing collective consignments, a step recommended by past experience, and also assign them the task of dealing on behalf of their fellow-prisoners with the detaining Authorities and the Protecting Power. In camps for officers and those of equivalent status, the senior officer by age and rank is recognized as the intermediary between the authorities and the PW.

These provisions were widely applied during the second World War. With very few exceptions, spokesmen were appointed in all camps. In the transit camps in Great Britain, the strength

and composition of which was constantly changing, there were no such representatives, but the Committee's delegation in this country was kept informed of the men's needs by the commandants. In Japan, which was not a signatory to the Convention, the camp commandants appointed the representatives without reference to the PW themselves.

The most important work done by camp leaders was in the help given to prisoners. The Committee received able and devoted co-operation from these liaison agents, responsible for receiving and issuing to PW of the same nationality the standard parcels and the collective supplies sent to them from their own countries through Geneva. The number of letters passing between the camp leaders and the Committee ran into several hundreds a day. This correspondence did much to help on the work of the Relief Division. The camp leader was responsible for ensuring the issue of supplies precisely according to the wishes of the donors, and for rendering an account to Geneva, supported by documents such as detailed receipts, issue vouchers etc. Besides these general duties, they had many other tasks : forwarding of petitions and complaints, making of enquiries, and collecting of information. The Committee frequently sent questionnaires to camp leaders, asking the names of men who seemed to be without friends or relatives and to find out what they needed. The camp leaders also did useful work in connection with the supply of books for the camp libraries. In order to deal with these constantly increasing duties, they recruited numbers of assistants and clerical workers from among their fellow-prisoners.

Throughout the war years, the Committee was able to appreciate how hard these men must have worked, and with what devotion and human understanding they applied themselves to the task of maintaining a regular flow and issue of relief supplies to PW.

The duties of camp leaders were also useful in other important connections ; for instance, they gave valuable assistance to the Committee in making up lists of PW. As an example, the American and British camp leaders sent to Geneva almost every week nominal lists of arrivals and departures of PW at each

camp, together with a monthly census. This information enabled the lists supplied by the official bureaux of the Detaining Power to be checked and completed. Towards the end of the war, camp leaders responded to a request from the Committee by sending to Geneva lists of PW who were totally or partially unfit for work, because of physical or mental disability. These details were most valuable to the relief agencies of their own countries.

PW quickly got used to the idea of going to their camp leader for information or advice, for the forwarding of grievances, or for assistance in their dealings with the authorities of the Detaining Power or their own country, through the intermediary of the Protecting Power or the Committee. Thus in each camp the leader became a centre of information, always on hand to give help or counsel, to mediate where he thought some useful purpose would be served, and to deal with the PWs' many and various worries. It was to the camp leader that prisoners turned for assistance in matters of supplementary allowances, allotment of pay to relatives, mail, transfer or release.

The calls made upon the camp leader grew more numerous and varied ; he arranged for the supply of newspapers, helped in getting up orchestras, amateur theatricals and exhibitions ; he looked after the general well-being of his comrades and devised every possible means of making their captivity less irksome. In many cases, too, the camp leader acted as a spiritual counsellor to whom the men took their personal anxieties and troubles. Thanks to his experience and his influence with the PW, he was able to make a judicious selection of complaints addressed to him, dismissing those which had no foundation. His office sometimes became a social service centre for prisoners' petitions and requests, both individual and collective. He helped in getting pensions awarded, and even organized collections for destitute wives and children of PW. When a PW died, it was the camp leader who wrote to the bereaved family and expressed the sympathies of his comrades. And it was the camp leader who saw to the tending of the grave.

In order to convey information of general interest, the camp leader posted notices on the camp notice-boards. The periodical production of camp magazines, written by the men themselves

—a venture which achieved considerable success—provided him with a useful vehicle for giving information and advice.

All these activities of the camp leaders kept them in close and constant touch with the ICRC. In addition to the routine co-operation mentioned above, which was principally concerned with the distribution of relief, camp leaders wrote to the Committee on countless individual matters. Every day their letters arrived at Geneva. A prisoner had not heard from his family, who had been evacuated; another asked for a copy of an official document which had been lost; a third wished to forward his will to the authorities of his own country, or a certificate of marriage by proxy, or a commercial document; yet another gave details of the death of a comrade.

Although as a rule camp leaders were able to correspond with the Committee without hindrance, it was on occasion necessary to urge upon the detaining Authorities that their mail should not be kept back or delayed. In many cases officials of the belligerents gave this class of correspondence priority of censorship, or simplified its procedure.

The Committee's delegates stationed in the various belligerent countries and making periodical visits to PW camps, came in regular personal contact with the camp leaders. At each visit, in talks very often without witnesses, the delegates noted their complaints and petitions, as well as many details of considerable importance concerning their conditions of captivity.

In the hospitals or infirmaries the delegates also made personal contact with the senior medical officer, who was detained in order to give medical attention to men of his own nationality, and who, in matters of health and hygiene, held a position to some extent comparable with that of the camp leader.

The Committee was sometimes confronted with the problem of camp leaders in officers' camps. It is not clear from Article 43 of the Convention if the appointment of the senior officer by age and rank (par. 4) takes the place of the election of a camp leader (par. 1), or if, on the contrary, there should be these two representatives at the same time. The respective functions of these two kinds of representatives are similar, but not identical. The camp leader's function is in fact to "represent the prisoners

before the military authorities and the Protecting Powers", whilst the senior officer is "recognized as the intermediary between the camp authorities and the officers".

The documents preliminary to the PW Convention seem to show that it was not intended that there should be in officers' camps both a camp leader and a representative in the person of the senior officer by age and rank. It was no doubt thought that the functions of the latter would include those of camp leader. On the other hand, the practice adopted in various countries during the second World War shows that this course was usually followed, though this was not invariable.

However, as the receipt, checking and issue of relief supplies is a task which might well appear too arduous for a single officer, who by definition is one of the oldest in the camp, the appointment of a representative, in addition to the camp senior, may appear useful.

The Committee, when consulted on this point, recommended that a practical solution should be sought, to answer the requirements of each case. It suggested that if the majority of officers felt that, for special reasons, the appointment of a camp leader in addition to the senior officer by age and rank was desirable, they could submit their proposed appointment of such a representative, or at least his name, for the approval of the camp authorities, in accordance with Art. 43, Sec. 2.

In April 1944, anxious to collect all documentary evidence that might be useful for the revision of the Conventions, the Committee sent to many camp leaders a questionnaire on their status and activities in the country where they were held. Their replies, many of them going into great detail, provided the Committee with valuable material for study.

(C). CORRESPONDENCE ¹

Freedom of correspondence, a vital means of solace to prisoners, is one of the basic principles of the Convention (Art. 35

¹ For information relative to the despatch of relief parcels from prisoners' own countries, see Vol. III.

to 41). Almost all the belligerents respected this principle during the last war. Though the Powers generally gave evidence of their intention faithfully to apply the Convention, the conveyance and distribution of mail to PW was a matter of considerable difficulty, arising chiefly from the volume of postal traffic and the lack of transport facilities.

During the first few months of the war, the Committee seldom had occasion to take action in regard to prisoners' postal services, which were operating normally. The large-scale military operations of the spring of 1940, which resulted in over two million combatants being taken prisoner by the Axis Powers within a few weeks, brought about a radical change. The postal and censorship services were overwhelmed with letters from newly-captured prisoners, and in June 1940 the Reich had temporarily to suspend all communications between PW and their own countries, whilst Italy subjected them to severe restrictions. The Committee used its influence to have this decision reversed as soon as circumstances allowed, i.e. at the end of August 1940, and made special efforts to ensure that every PW should be enabled to send a card, known as "Capture Card", to his relatives, as laid down by Art. 36 of the Convention. However, the number of combatants captured up to that time, and the number taken in the ensuing operations on all fronts reached such proportions, that it was no longer possible to object to some measure of restriction. The belligerents tried to limit both the number of letters sent and the number of letters received by PW. In face of the difficulties of applying this measure, they soon fell back on the expedient of limiting the number of communications sent by the men. In addition, most States introduced stereotyped letters and postcards, with a limited number of lines; this system remained in force throughout the war. Certain belligerents, Germany amongst them, took the further step of instituting stereotyped forms of reply, which deprived next of kin of their freedom of communication, and thus constituted a breach of the Convention. The Committee raised no objection to the use of ordinary stereotyped communications, except that in May 1943, it asked the German Government to allow such forms to be issued without charge. On the other hand,

it was successful in its efforts to abolish the stereotyped reply, and to ensure that prisoners were permitted to send a reasonable monthly quota of letters and postcards.

In December 1940 the Committee was able to record that its efforts had not been in vain, as most of the belligerents had adopted a minimum of two letters and four postcards a month for each PW. These figures remained unchanged till the end of the war.

The Soviet Union, which was not a party to the 1929 Convention, did not allow any regular correspondence between its prisoners and their own country. Some exchanges of correspondence did take place from time to time via Turkey. Details of the efforts made by the Committee in this connection are given in a later chapter on the war in Eastern Europe.

The question of correspondence between China and the Western Allies on the one hand and Japan on the other, created very complex problems. Postal facilities for PW between China and Japan hardly existed. In the case of communication between Japan and the West conditions were not quite so bad, but the vast distances involved, the unreliability of the postal services, and the unhelpful attitude of the Japanese authorities made postal communications infrequent. The Committee had approached the Japanese government on the subject in the first days of the war, but it was soon convinced of the impossibility of establishing any regular postal service, and therefore set up a telegraphic message service. This also is more fully discussed in the chapter concerning war in the Far East.

Besides these questions of a general kind, the Committee and its delegations had also to deal with many special cases, some of which were of concern to quite large groups of people.

In October 1943, the Committee was informed that many Yugoslav prisoners in German hands were being refused the right to correspond with their relatives living in territories annexed by Hungary and Italy. Representations made to the German Government enabled this matter to be put right. At the same time, the Committee succeeded in obtaining a considerable improvement in the régime of PW held in Germany, Italy, and

Great Britain ; these men were henceforth permitted to write to persons living elsewhere than in the prisoners' own country ; they were also permitted to write to their near relatives (father, son or brother) who were PW.

In July 1942, the German Government considered that the volume of correspondence of German PW in the British Commonwealth, especially in Australia, was too small, and decided to reduce the correspondence quota of British PW to a ratio based on the number of letters received from German PW held in the Commonwealth. It was to be feared that this measure of retaliation would in turn lead to reprisals. The Committee tried to bring about a settlement of this dispute, and in the autumn of the same year obtained the assurance that regular communications would be restored.

Among the steps taken by the ICRC, mention must be made of the representations to all belligerents to establish their recognition of the right of camp leaders to correspond freely with the Committee. Finally, the transport of mails undertaken by the delegates in the course of their travels should be referred to, and in particular those in December 1944 and February 1945 between Lisbon and the Channel Islands, which had been cut off by military operations.

Although the Committee was principally concerned with safeguarding the right of PW to correspond with their relatives, it did not lose sight of the equally important problem of the quick transmission of such mail.

Ceaseless complaints were received at Geneva regarding the slowness of postal services. The causes must be sought in the disorganization and inadequacy of transport and the strain placed upon the censorship. In the light of its past experience, the Committee made several approaches to governments, with practical suggestions for improving postal communications. In January 1941, for instance, a postal service was established between Chiasso and Port Said for the conveyance of PW mail from the Near East. This was due to the initiative of the Committee and involved long negotiations. Again, it was the Committee that suggested to the German Government the setting-up of a Stuttgart-Lisbon air service in November 1942.

This was followed, as a matter of course, by the corresponding service between Lisbon and London.

Another means used by the Committee to secure quicker transmission of news was the devising of printed forms, known as the Express Message Service, and the institution of a telegraph and radio message service ; these latter were chiefly intended to meet the lack of transport between the Far East and the West. Mention must also be made of the " Red Cross Message ", instituted in 1943, which was of great value in enabling German PW to get in touch with relatives who had been displaced as a result of the war. A detailed description of these systems for exchange of news, in charge of the Central PW Agency, will be found in Vol. II.

Censorship delays were also frequently taken up by the Committee. It persistently urged that the duplication of censorship precautions within the same country should be abolished, and likewise additional scrutiny in countries of transit. In some cases its efforts in this direction were rewarded with satisfactory results.

The carrying of mails is primarily the business of the postal authorities, over which the Committee's influence is of necessity limited ; the latter's duties therefore had to consist principally in seeing that the Convention was respected, and in making recommendations and suggestions.

The Committee, however, went beyond this, and in agreement with the Governments of the States at war did much on its own initiative to smooth out and increase the rate of transmission of PW mail. It even went the length of itself undertaking the conveyance of mail, as will be seen in the chapter of this Report dealing with communications in general.

It was due to the genuine desire of most of the belligerents to give effect to the terms of the Convention relating to PW mail, and to their helpful attitude towards suggestions and practical measures that the Committee was able to render valuable service in this field.

VII. Assistance to Prisoners of War under Prosecution

(A). GENERAL REMARKS

When the Regulations concerning the laws and usages of war annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 were drafted, no specific clauses were included providing assistance for PW under prosecution. This instrument simply set forth in Art. 8 the principle that "prisoners of war shall be subject to the laws, regulations and orders in force in the army of the State in whose power they are." Legal assistance is, however, a vital necessity for PW liable to penalties, and even to the death sentence, under enemy jurisdiction.

During the first World War, an agreement was signed by the belligerents France and Germany, at Berne on August 30, 1916, and laid stress on the need to make good this omission. The agreement was purely conservative, and provided that as from September 1, 1916, the execution of sentences passed against PW during captivity by military tribunals in France or Germany should be suspended until the conclusion of peace.

In 1929, the Diplomatic Conference convened at Geneva, which had the task of codifying the statute of PW, thought it necessary to draft regulations which, in case of need, would have the effect of making the penal laws of a country as applied to incidents of war more humane, and which would ensure respect for those rules. Such was the aim of Arts. 60 to 67 of the Convention.

These provisions established the right for PW to choose counsel and nominate an interpreter ; they lay down for the benefit of

PW and in accordance with the principles of the Hague Regulations, the same rules of judicial competence, procedure and appeals as for members of the forces of the Detaining Power. The supervision of these stipulations as a whole rests entirely with the Protecting Power, which must be given due notice of the judicial proceedings, in order that it may follow the case, unless exceptional circumstances oblige them to be held *in camera*, in the interests of the security of the State.

A sentence of death may not be carried out before the expiry of a period of at least three months after notification of the sentence to the Power in whose armed forces the prisoner served. The notification is made through the intermediary of the Protecting Power.

Although the duty of the Protecting Power is to guarantee legal assistance to PW, it acts in these circumstances as the mandatary of the Power in whose armed forces the PW served, and which is, ultimately, responsible for the protection of the members of its own forces. Since a state of war prevents it from taking action through its own diplomatic agents, it has recourse to a neutral Power to act on its behalf. These duties do not, as a rule, fall to the ICRC, unless the Committee considers that action should be taken in case of a failure to observe treaty stipulations.

The events of the second World War, however, involved the Committee far more directly in the question of legal assistance for PW than had formerly been the case.

So long as the interests of the belligerent Powers could be effectively safeguarded by a Protecting Power, the ICRC was satisfied with keeping to the text of the Convention and its own principles. In all cases, however, of PW being without any Protecting Power, the Committee, in accordance with its custom, did its utmost to make up for the deficiency.

(B). ACTION IN BEHALF OF ALLIED PRISONERS

The stand taken up by Germany towards the countries she occupied during the first phase of the war, had the effect of depriving many PW of the help of any Protecting Power. Whilst

some (for instance, Yugoslavs, Poles and Greeks) were entirely without assistance, others (such as French and Belgian PW), had the protection of missions directed by their fellow-countrymen and which were able, at least for a certain period, to assume the functions of a Protecting Power in their behalf.

Yugoslav PW in Germany. — The ICRC instructed its Berlin delegation in 1942 to take the necessary steps for these men to be given legal assistance. The German Government at first replied that this measure could only apply to Serbian PW, as they considered the Croats to be solely under the jurisdiction of the new Croat Government set up in Zagreb. Moreover, the German authorities appeared willing to allow the ICRC only to appoint counsel, and declined to permit the charges in the case and the hearing to be subject to any check by Geneva. These conditions were all the more unsatisfactory, since the Red Cross in Belgrade insisted upon more comprehensive guarantees, and placed at the disposal of the Committee the sum of two and a half million dinars (about 125,000 marks) to cover counsel's fees. It was necessary at least to be able to verify the main lines of the proceedings. The German Government was again approached, and after several months' hesitation, stated that they were willing to accept the proposals made by the ICRC in May 1943. These provided for a circular letter, duly approved by the German High Command, to be sent to all camp leaders, asking them to inform the Committee's delegation of the names of PW under judicial prosecution who required legal assistance. Counsel, chosen by the delegation from a list supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (under the procedure laid down in Art. 62 of the Convention) would report on his work and supply a summary of the hearings in the case; his fees would be paid by the delegation. After several months discussion, the delegation was able to get an assurance, in February 1944, that it would be informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of any judicial proceedings undertaken against Serbian PW, in all cases where the penalty exceeded four years solitary confinement, and of any proceedings against general officers. When the circular letter to camp leaders was being drafted, the German High Command deleted

the reference to general officers, so that finally the ICRC was only entitled to assist PW of all ranks who were liable to the above penalty.

Thus, it was not until after fifteen months of laborious negotiation that the Berlin delegation was, in May 1944, in a position to take practical steps to provide legal assistance to Yugoslav PW who were without any Protecting Power. Sentences passed on seventeen of these men by the German courts were communicated by the ICRC to the delegation of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Geneva.

Yugoslav and Greek PW in Italy. — In June 1942, the delegation in Rome reported that these men had no Protecting Power, and suggested steps to enable them to be given legal aid. The Italian authorities were also approached on the question. In May 1943, the Rome delegation reported that the Italian Government was in principle disposed to allow the ICRC to take certain measures to assist these PW. The delegation could visit the men and choose an advocate for them, provided that the Committee acted in its own name, and not as the authorized agent of any government ; furthermore, they had to abstain from the transmission of information to any other persons. The Italian authorities also stated that consideration would be given only to single cases brought forward by the delegation.

Only one PW, however, was able to benefit from the assistance of the ICRC, since negotiations with the Italian authorities by the delegation in favour of Greek and Yugoslav PW were brought to an end by the armistice of September 1943.

Polish PW in Germany. — Negotiations of the ICRC with the German authorities led to no result. In October 1943, the Berlin delegation was, however, successful in getting the concession of regular legal proceedings for a Polish PW who had been sentenced to four months' imprisonment for alleged false testimony.

Towards the end of 1944, when the German Government seemed more favourably disposed, the Committee again approached the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Berlin concerning

the question of legal aid for Polish PW ; later events however prevented these discussions from being concluded.

French PW in Germany. — These were, from June 1940 onwards, placed under the protection of the “ Diplomatic Service for Prisoners of War ”, a French Commission at the head of which was the ambassador Scapini, and which assumed the functions of a Protecting Power in their behalf.

The Scapini Mission, during its period of operation, was responsible for legal assistance to French PW in Germany. The ICRC, however, also intervened on humanitarian grounds whenever it had the opportunity. Thus, having been informed in April 1942 by a letter from the Office for PW at Lyons that French prisoners confined at Graudenz had not been allowed to be visited by the Scapini Mission, the Committee instructed its delegate in Berlin to make an enquiry. This established that most of these men had been sentenced for infringement of the German law forbidding relations between PW and German women. Considering that this law, which could not by definition be applicable to German servicemen, involved excessive penalties, the ICRC asked that the PW might be visited. Following this intervention, the prison at Graudenz was first visited by officers of the German General Staff, which led to initial improvements of the men's living conditions ; later on, members of the Scapini Mission were allowed to visit them regularly.

After the Allied landings in France, the Scapini Mission had to discontinue its work, and French PW were thus deprived of protection, although they still remained in German hands for an indefinite period.

On September 12, 1944, the ICRC proposed to the French Provisional Government that it should start negotiations to extend the Committee's field of activities in Germany to cover French PW. To bring discussions to a satisfactory conclusion, the Committee wished to receive an assurance that it might continue to exercise similar activities in favour of German PW in French hands. As no neutral Power was apparently to be called upon to protect French interests in Germany, the Com-

mittee judged it to be in accordance with its humanitarian purpose to assume certain tasks usually performed by the Protecting Power, in particular those concerning legal assistance. It proposed to visit PW under prosecution, to make sure that they had counsel, and to communicate notifications of proceedings and judgments.

On October 2, 1944, the French Government accepted these proposals and formally agreed that the ICRC should take similar action in behalf of all German PW in the hands of the French forces ; they reserved the right, however, to call upon a Protecting Power at a later date.

This reply was conveyed to the German Government, which would have preferred to have another French diplomatic mission. The question was submitted to camp leaders from the Berlin region, who were assembled for this purpose, and their opposition to the German proposal enabled the ICRC to press the German Government to agree to the Committee's suggestion, especially as the French Government set up in Paris stated that they would no longer inform Geneva of proceedings brought against German PW unless they obtained reciprocity for French PW in similar circumstances. The German Government would still, however, only consider the appointment of a French diplomatic mission, and the negotiations started by the ICRC to obtain legal aid for French PW in Germany were patiently continued for a year, without any result, although a settlement seemed likely at the moment of the German capitulation on May 7, 1945.

The fact remains, however, that the interventions of the Committee were of benefit to French PW in Germany. They led to the period of preventive detention being deducted from the sentences ; they further prevented the quashing of judgments with a view to severer sentences after a fresh trial for the same offences. Mention should be made of the Committee's steps in behalf of French PW sentenced to death. In these cases the ICRC firmly maintained that the three months' interval provided by Art. 66 had not been observed, so long as the sentence had not been communicated to the French authorities in Paris.

Belgian PW in Germany. — These men were protected by the United States, until the latter entered the war at the end of 1941. From this date, the ICRC made every effort for more frequent visits to these PW who were deprived of a Protecting Power. After several months' discussion between the German and Belgian authorities, the "Delegation of the Liaison Service for Belgian PW", under the direction of Count T'Serclaes, was set up. Like the Scapini Mission, it was given the functions of a Protecting Power. This Delegation was in contact with the ICRC for the exchange of information.

The German authorities began to limit the activities of the T'Serclaes mission in 1943, and it was finally dissolved in June 1944.

In October 1944, the ICRC suggested to the Belgian Government that it should approach the German authorities for permission to act in the place of the T'Serclaes Mission. Towards the end of the year, the Belgian Government gave an affirmative reply and requested the Committee to ask Belgian camp leaders to draw upon their camp benefit funds for the sums required to pay the fees of the German advocates chosen for the defence, these sums to be ultimately refunded in Belgium.

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin gave the delegation of the ICRC verbal authority to deal with all cases of legal assistance to Belgian PW.

A circular letter giving the substance of these negotiations was then sent to all Belgian camp leaders. These men, who had always played a more active part in the legal assistance of their comrades than camp leaders of other nationalities, had in fact made a spontaneous appeal to the ICRC immediately the T'Serclaes Mission ceased its work. The delegation in Belgium took over the files of the Liaison Service for PW, which were sent on to Geneva for ultimate despatch to the departments concerned in Brussels.

(C). ACTION IN BEHALF OF AXIS PRISONERS

German and Italian PW in North Africa. — After the end of the campaigns in Libya and Tunisia, those men, who were held

by the forces of the British Commonwealth and the United States, were under the protection of Switzerland from the autumn of 1943. Those who were in French hands, however, found themselves without any Protecting Power. The French National Liberation Committee had asked Spain, which until the armistice of June 1940 had been in charge of German and Italian interests in France and French territories, to assume once more the functions of Protecting Power for German and Italian PW, but this proposal was subject to the approval by Germany and Italy of a Protecting Power for French PW held by these States. When approached by the Spanish authorities on this matter, the German Government refused their consent, and no reply was received from the Italian Government.

The French authorities continued none the less to pass on to the Spanish Consuls the documents concerning prosecutions and sentences relating to German and Italian PW in North Africa ; copies of these documents were also sent to the ICRC.

In November 1943, the German authorities requested the ICRC to take charge of legal assistance to German PW held by the French Forces in North Africa. This was the first instance of the Committee receiving such a request from a Government. It was accepted, on humanitarian grounds, and in view of the fact that these PW had no Protecting Power ; at the same time, the Committee stressed that it could not assume any official mandate and remained sole judge of its own actions. Later, the German Government made renewed appeals to the ICRC and sought their intervention in special cases.

The Committee gave effect to these appeals, having obtained authority, by December 1943, to visit PW held in prison. On cases being notified, it took steps with military tribunals, Government representatives and with advocates, to obtain the application of Arts. 60 to 67 of the Convention. The French authorities in such cases showed the greatest understanding.

In February 1944, the Spanish Consul in Algiers informed the delegation there that he would in future hand over to them all original documents transmitted by the French authorities, the German Government having notified the Spanish Government that they had " commissioned the ICRC to take the place of the

Protecting Power ". Although this expression gave rise to some comment, the French authorities, when approached by the delegate, raised no objection. Until then, the communications handed to the delegation consisted of copies of documents sent out by the Commissariat for War and intended for the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs ; the documents were marked " For transmission to the Protecting Power, in accordance with Art. 60 of the Convention ". Henceforth, either of the Commissariats, when corresponding direct with the delegation of the ICRC, used the following formula : " In the absence of a Protecting Power for German (or Italian) interests and in accordance with Art. 60 of the Convention..."

The delegation of the ICRC in Algiers was thus, from the spring of 1944, kept regularly informed of prosecutions of German or Italian PW, and of the sentences given in these cases. It was therefore in a position to intervene in their behalf ; the delegates could visit the men concerned, to verify if their treatment accorded with the Convention and to give them relief and moral support. They chose counsel for the defence, were present at the hearings of these cases and reported to the French authorities any situation which appeared to be unusual.

The ICRC conveyed to the German or Italian Governments regularly the information received on this subject and it continued to do so after the armistice in 1945. The Committee thus investigated the cases of 150 German PW, and more than 300 names of PW under prosecution or sentenced were communicated by it to the Italian Government.

The field of action of the Committee as substitute for the Protecting Power was considerably widened by the capitulation of the German armed forces. It was possible to extend the work of missions of the ICRC in North Africa, which had more effective results than similar efforts in Germany.

In May 1945, an approach was made to the United States authorities, and in the following month they authorized the delegation of the ICRC to visit PW under prosecution in American territory. The delegates were not notified of the prosecutions, but they were allowed to be present at the hearings and after the sentence had been passed, received a summary

report of the case. Counsel for defence was either officially appointed, or chosen by the prisoner and if he so desired, assisted by an interpreter.

The Greek Government, in their circular letter of July 7, 1945, instructed public prosecutors and judges to "communicate to the delegation of the ICRC in Greece all information concerning former Italian and German military personnel under prosecution in the courts, to apply strictly all clauses of the law relating to the choice of an advocate and to procedure which, under Art. 69 of the law, shall be that applicable to personnel belonging to the Greek armed forces", and to convey the sentence passed "to the Protecting Power, in this instance, the delegation of the ICRC in Greece".

In order to widen the scope of the results thus obtained, the Committee reminded the delegates in a circular letter dated July 30, 1945, that the war having come to an end, the Protecting Powers no longer bore the responsibility of the functions vested in them by the Convention. As the Committee was obliged to extend its activities, to meet any worsening in the situation of PW, it was necessary to get authority from the Detaining Powers to carry out their new duties, in particular with regard to legal assistance. Two cases in point had to be distinguished : (a) PW under prosecution for offences committed during captivity, and (b) PW under prosecution for offences committed before capture. The last-named were especially in need of legal aid, since some Detaining Powers had shown a tendency either no longer to classify them as PW, or to release them as military personnel, in order to arrest them again as civilians.

Without in any way taking a definite stand concerning the question of "war crimes" in general, the ICRC was obliged to define its attitude concerning PW under prosecution, within the framework of the Conventions. This it did in the following Memorandum, dated October 14, 1946 :

At the present time, the Allied authorities hold in camps and prisons a great number of PW who are detained for security reasons, or under suspicion of offences or crimes.

Some Detaining Powers have given delegates of the ICRC occasional or standing authority to visit the places of detention of these men.

During their visits, the delegates have been able to establish that the treatment given to this category of detainees varies to a great extent, and that PW as a general rule do not benefit by the application of the PW Convention of July 27, 1929, either because the status of PW is denied them, thus depriving them of treaty protection, or because they are at first released and then arrested once more as civilians.

The ICRC considers that all military personnel in captivity who have to answer before the courts for offences or crimes must retain the benefit of PW status. In consequence, they should as far as possible, during the whole period of their detention and until they are judged, be subject to the conditions provided by the Convention, without any *a priori* discrimination in regard to the forces in which they served.

To this end, they should be allowed to have, without restriction, visits from delegates of the ICRC, and to correspond regularly with their relatives.

PW under prosecution should moreover benefit by Arts. 60 to 67 of the Convention, which should remain applicable to them, irrespective of the penal clauses under which they are prosecuted. In addition, the treatment during their preventive arrest should be not less favourable than that given to nationals of the Detaining Power in similar circumstances.

It is indeed beyond doubt that the guarantees of procedure provided by the Convention for PW under prosecution are of a general nature, and that PW should benefit by them, irrespective of the offences they are charged with, since the guilt of the accused is only presumed until judgment.

To see that the above guarantees are fulfilled is the part of the Protecting Power. In this regard, the ICRC considers that it would be regrettable if the elimination of the body serving as Protecting Power were to signify entire failure to implement the provisions embodied in the Convention for the safeguard of PW.

The ICRC cannot however assume this task without the consent of the Powers concerned, and it has not, in fact, the necessary means at its disposal to carry out the work in full. It desires nevertheless to give its support, as far as it is able to do so, to PW under prosecution, and it would therefore be grateful if the Detaining Powers would refrain from denying to PW who apply for its intervention, the opportunity of receiving that aid. Should the Detaining Powers agree, the ICRC would naturally limit its action to cases where its intervention is asked for, and which it would only investigate within the framework of the treaty stipulations, without having to express any opinion on the grounds of the charges preferred.

In countries of the British Commonwealth, the ICRC could visit PW in confinement, transmit documents for the defence,

conduct enquiries into the reasons for detention, supply attestations in favour of the PW concerned, and be present at the hearings. The Committee tried to reduce the period of preventive detention to a minimum, and obtained that sentenced PW should be repatriated, whereby those guilty of minor offences were reprieved, while the others were handed over to the courts of their own countries. In Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg, the assistance of the ICRC consisted principally of visiting the prisons.

The ICRC was particularly active in behalf of PW under prosecution in France, with regard to offences committed both before and after capture. For this purpose, the Committee set up a Legal Section at its Paris Delegation. The Section took steps to obtain improvements in prison conditions, especially at Toulouse, Bordeaux and Arras. The Committee made over to the Central Prison Administration twenty complete dental equipments, and got permission for dentists who were PW to treat the detainees in some of the prisons. It made many attempts to ensure that PW's personal funds which had been retained in the PW camps, contrary to regulations, should be transferred to the prison governor, to be placed to the men's account. It also applied to the Head Chaplain, for chaplains to visit the prisons and for the distribution of objects of devotion and books. It further helped detainees to correspond with their relatives, by making deposits with the prison governor for the use of civilians who did not benefit by free postage.

Within the scope of legal assistance proper, the ICRC through its Legal Section in Paris, whenever there was a clear case of necessity, negotiated with presidents and magistrates for the appointment of counsel, for grants of bail, releases and the dismissal of charges. It applied to the presiding judge to summon witnesses for the defence, and to camp leaders and camp commandants to raise funds to reimburse counsel's outlay incurred in the case. The Committee demanded the services of other counsel, whenever the advocate appointed appeared to be failing in his duty. It also suggested arrangements for the repatriation to Germany of discharged civilians, and for a procedure to bring PW direct before the court, in

order to reduce the period of preventive confinement to a minimum. The Committee was instrumental in having the necessary research made in Germany for documentary evidence, to be available for military courts and counsel. It watched over petitions for reprieve and their translation, and approached the President of the Republic for support in certain appeals.

The members of the Legal Section in Paris made forty-three visits to prisons, where they inspected kitchens and cells, and talked with detainees, the governors of prisons and social workers. Delegates in the provinces also visited prisons, and this step constituted an important advance in the aid given to prisoners under prosecution.

The right to visit prisons, which had been opposed by the German authorities in regard to military prisons until 1943, and in regard to civilian prisons until 1945, was permitted in North Africa by the French authorities, after having at first been refused by these authorities for France itself. Gradually, however, by invoking the general provisions of Arts. 43 and 86, Sec. 2, of the Convention, which refers to visits to PW, and thanks to the friendly relations it had built up with the French authorities, the ICRC was able to increase the number of its visits, which have since become a well-established practice. From a humanitarian point of view, this is a great step forward, if one considers the detainees' isolation and their physical privations and moral distress. It may be added that these visits have often led to better organization of legal assistance and hence to the easing, in some slight degree, of the inexorable severities of the law.

VIII. Reprisals against Prisoners of War

Although it is true that legal doctrine authorizes the use of reprisals in certain cases, "a grievous exception to the principles of equity by which the innocent may not suffer for the guilty" (Oxford Manual, 1880) the ICRC, for its part, has always vigorously opposed the use of reprisals against the person of war victims, and of PW in particular. This had already been the theme of its appeal of July 12, 1916, to the Governments of belligerent States ¹.

Despite this appeal, these practices were in fact widely extended during the first World War. The ICRC also had to make repeated efforts, in association with the Holy See and the King of Spain, in order to obtain some alleviation of the hardships endured by the men detained in "reprisal camps".

Towards the end of the first World War, in May 1918, the chief adversaries, i.e. France and Germany, had however, under the influence of the humanitarian concepts of Geneva, consented to sign an agreement on the treatment of prisoners. This laid down that henceforward, measures of reprisal should not be taken by either of the two Governments, except after one month's notice given to the Federal Political Department in Berne.

The ICRC, relying on this precedent, succeeded, after the War, in getting acceptance of the idea that the exercise of reprisals to the detriment of prisoners should be prohibited for good. The result was the text of Art. 2, Sec. 3 of the 1929

¹ Cf. *Bull. int. des Soc. de la C.-R.*, July 1916, p. 266; Oct. 1916, p. 379; Jan. 1917, p. 12; April 1917, p. 146.

Convention, which provides that " measures of reprisal against prisoners are forbidden ". On the outbreak of the second World War, almost all the belligerents were formally bound by this text.

Although this provision had improved the situation to a remarkable degree in comparison with the first World War, the ICRC had to remain vigilant in order to make this step forward in human rights respected.

At every lapse or every threat which came to its knowledge, the ICRC spoke out. No less than seven official acts of intervention by the ICRC may be counted, in the form of appeals to the belligerent nations, or of notes to certain Governments, to remind them that the Powers had renounced the practice of reprisals against PW. Moreover, the ICRC and its delegates did not spare themselves in taking steps to the same end. The question is indeed one of capital importance, for a breach of the law to counter an alleged violation may lead, not to redress of the alleged wrongs, but to renewed breaches, and thus entail by degrees the destruction of the principles of human rights.

We recall briefly the circumstances in which the ICRC framed its appeals, as well as the results of its principal negotiations : the most notable of these was devoted to the case of the shackling of British prisoners in Germany, following on certain incidents of the fighting at Dieppe in 1942.

The first of these appeals coincided with the beginning of hostilities. It appeared in the covering letter of September 13, 1939, addressed to the Governments of belligerent States, transmitting a Memorandum¹ relating to hospital localities and safety zones, and read as follows :

" In all circumstances, even should reprisals or measures of retaliation—which might be considered as legitimate by the Government concerned—be decided on, the ICRC considers itself bound to insist, in especially urgent fashion, that such reprisals or measures of retaliation shall remain within the limits of humanitarian principles, put forward, in particular, in the Preamble to the Hague Convention of October 18, 1907."

¹ See " *Revue internationale* ", Sept. 1939, p. 762.

It will be noted that the wording of this text is aimed both at reprisals and measures of retaliation (retortion). These latter, according to the customary definition of international law, have not the gravity of reprisals. Although they are severe measures, they do not in effect amount to a violation of the law. It is a different matter with reprisals, which constitute the most serious attack on the ideals of Geneva ; this is why the ICRC had to devote particular attention to them. The wording of subsequent texts mention only reprisals, and are silent on measures of retaliation, or retortion.

In its appeal of March 12, 1940¹ to the High Contracting Parties signatory to the Geneva Convention and the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, an appeal whose chief purpose was the protection of civilian populations against air bombardment, the ICRC wrote thus :

“ . . . The ICRC believes, moreover, that it is of fundamental importance to lay down that no measures of reprisal (in so far as the Powers concerned hold them to be legitimate) shall be taken, at all events before the party concerned has been able to make its views known, within a time-limit to be determined, through the intermediary of the Power representing its interests with the adverse party, or by any other channel that the Powers may choose. No means shall be left untried to secure that the States at war shall not enter upon the highly dangerous method of reprisals.”

In May, 1940, a German airman had made a forced landing in the neighbourhood of Charleville and was set upon by the inhabitants. The German Government announced that for every airman put to death, fifty Allied prisoners would be shot. It persisted in this threat, following on the ill-treatment to which (according to the German account) German parachute troops were exposed when operating on Belgian, French or Dutch territory. In a note dated May 16, 1940, addressed to the ICRC, the German Consul-General in Geneva accused the Allied press of attempting to confuse the minds of its readers as to the character of parachute forces. The note stated that these men were part of the regular forces, that their uniforms

¹ See “ *Revue internationale* ”, April 1940, p. 321.

were known, as the Military Attachés in Berlin had seen them at the great review of the preceding April 28; the note conveyed the threat of the German Government to have recourse to "the most severe reprisals against prisoners in their hands".

The ICRC replied that it would not fail to forward the note to the Governments concerned. Recalling the prohibition of reprisals set out by Art. 2, Sec. 3 of the 1929 Convention, and its earlier appeals on this subject, the ICRC begged the German Government not to carry out its threats. The outcome was satisfactory, as the French and British Governments at once replied that parachute troops wearing the uniform of their country would be treated as PW covered by the 1929 Convention, and that only those wearing civilian clothing or uniforms of another country would be treated as spies.

Two years later, the extremely grave incident of the shackling occurred.

At the time of the attempted landing of a Canadian corps at Dieppe, German PW had been handcuffed on the battlefield. The British Government admitted the fact, pleading the necessities of warfare in this connection and basing its standpoint furthermore on the terms of Art. 1, Sec. 2, which provides for certain exceptions to the treaty regulations for PW, such exceptions being confined, strictly speaking, to fighting at sea or in the air. The German authorities, apparently at a very high level, held on the contrary that a violation of the Convention had taken place, and decided to order the handcuffing, for twelve hours every day, of more than 1,000 British PW (Canadian and other). The British and Canadian authorities retaliated by the same procedure, and made known their case in law to the German Government through the intermediary of the Protecting Power, stating that these reprisals would cease when the handcuffing in Germany had been ended.

Placed thus on a legal footing, the dispute seemed insoluble. It was at this stage that the ICRC intervened. In a telegram addressed to all the Governments concerned, dated October 9, 1942¹ it declared:

¹ See "Revue internationale", Oct. 1942, p. 796.

Official press reports refer to reprisals against prisoners, measures contrary to Art. 2, Sec. 3 of the Geneva Convention of 1929. In the view of the ICRC, such measures might gravely prejudice the whole question of PW and affect the work of the Red Cross. The ICRC offers its good offices for all mediation which the situation requires.

The British and Canadian Governments seemed inclined to accept these good offices, but the German Government delayed in replying. The ICRC thereupon renewed its appeal by a second telegram, dated October 22, as follows :

. . . In these tragic circumstances, the ICRC emphasizes further that when one party, pleading the wrong committed by the other, resorts in its own turn to measures of extreme severity, then the conflict, far from approaching a solution in that way, is merely aggravated, as are the sufferings inflicted in the camps of both sides on disarmed combatants who have the right to generous treatment.

Certain belligerents are already expressing doubts concerning the good will of others to observe the Conventions, the value of which has been constantly demonstrated during these years of war. In face of the threatening gravity of this situation, the ICRC appeals to all belligerents to remain faithful to the letter and the spirit of these significant agreements, and to use all means proper to assuring humane and chivalrous treatment to enemy wounded or prisoners. Thus respect for all the Geneva Conventions will be maintained unimpaired.

At the same time, M. Carl Burckhardt, a member of the ICRC, wrote a personal letter to the President of the German Red Cross, begging him to use every resource, so that this painful matter should be settled.

The letter and the telegram were submitted to the Head of the German Reich, and his personal reaction was reported to the ICRC. He is said to have declared that the telegram was a reasonable document. An annotation to the letter, made apparently by General Keitel, shows that it was apparently decided to have recourse to "the intervention of the ICRC to settle the matter". German G.H.Q. telephoned to the same effect to the ICRC delegate in Berlin on the evening of October 23, 1942.

Unfortunately, in spite of these favourable signs, the dispute remained in abeyance as between the respective chanceries. Although from December 12, 1942 onwards, handcuffing had

been abandoned for good in Britain and Canada, this was not the case in Germany where (after the Christmas truce proposed by the ICRC to the President of the German Red Cross) British prisoners were again shackled. One year later, at the end of October 1943, an ICRC delegate, visiting camps in Germany established that one thousand British PW were shackled daily for twelve hours, as a mark of resentment over the Dieppe incident. At most, the chain linking the handcuffs had been lengthened by a few inches. The German officers in charge of the handcuffing seemed to regret this duty, which they excused on the plea of "orders from higher up". The German Red Cross, through the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, informed the ICRC that it seemed to them an opportune moment to attempt intervention once more.

M. Carl Burckhardt then decided to go to Berlin, where he stayed from November 16 to 20, 1943, to renew in the most urgent manner the representations already made by the ICRC. After certain initial difficulties, he finally obtained satisfaction, on condition that the matter be treated with discretion and that the communication to the British Government be made simply in the form of a report of the ICRC delegate in Berlin. The delegate made a personal visit and was able to confirm the lifting of the reprisals; he reported to the ICRC, who immediately informed the British Minister in Berne.

The handcuffing episode, although the most serious, was not the only instance of reprisals which prompted the ICRC to intervene.

In presenting the telegram of October 22, 1942, to the Wilhelmstrasse, the ICRC delegate referred to four other cases of reprisals, or threats of reprisals as having occurred in Germany: (1) the withholding of mail from British PW; (2) cruelties inflicted on civilian internees at Liebenau, over eighty being cooped up in one small, damp room, in retaliation for the bad housing of German internees in Jamaica; (3) the confiscation of luggage, toilet articles, table equipment, decorations and badges of rank of British officers, in reprisal for the treatment of German PW on a ship bound for Durban; (4) threats of reprisals for the bombing of a dressing-station in North Africa.

As a reprisal camp had been set up at Cholm, in Poland, in retaliation for the conditions imposed on German PW, who were guarded by Jews in a camp in Palestine, the ICRC delegate in Cairo was instructed to carry out the necessary enquiry. He verified that this latter camp had been dissolved, and the ICRC was then able to secure the breaking up of the camp at Cholm in April, 1943.

On July 24, 1943, in view of the developments of the War and the frequent bombing of towns, the ICRC "appeals to the belligerent Powers, even in the face of military considerations, to respect the native right of the human being to be treated according to justice, not summarily, and without laying on him the responsibility for acts he has not committed . . ."

The German Government, in September, 1943, expressed its anxiety to the ICRC about the treatment of PW by General de Gaulle's forces, and brought forward new threats aimed at their adversary. On December 30, the ICRC recalled that "the 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of PW expressly forbids in Art. 2 all measures of reprisals against prisoners".

On May 11, 1944, in connection with the execution of French combatants and civilians held prisoner in North Africa and in France, the ICRC addressed a note to the French authorities in Algiers and in Vichy, which read as follows :

"The ICRC, greatly alarmed . . . holds it to be its duty to recall its appeals of July 24, August 23, and December 30, 1943, requesting all belligerents :

(1) to ensure the maintenance of guarantees which PW must enjoy in all circumstances, until the end of hostilities ;

(2) to respect, even in the face of military considerations, the native right of the human being to be treated according to justice, in a spirit of equity, and without laying on him the responsibility for acts which he has not committed ;

(3) to abstain from all reprisals against PW and internees of all categories who have no further part in hostilities, or who have never participated in them, and whom captivity renders helpless . . . The ICRC must emphasize, moreover, that such measures, far from ending painful conflicts of this nature, only makes them the more bitter by ensuring their continuance".

In this Report will be found, in the chapter on "Partisans", an account of the representations made to the German Government by the ICRC and to the Command of the French Forces in Upper Savoy, in an effort to forestall measures of reprisal against French and German prisoners.

Finally, on December 4, 1944, the German Consul-General in Geneva again submitted to the ICRC a protest against certain judicial proceedings taken in France, and a threat to carry out reprisals "against Gaullists who had been deported because of activities hostile to Germany and the authorities of occupation". On December 9, the ICRC replied to this note by a letter of its President to Herr von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, and once more took up the whole problem of the protection of civilian internees and deportees.

The question of reprisals is thus one amongst many to which the ICRC at Geneva gave its most vigilant attention during the second World War.

The notable success won in the matter of handcuffing, whereby the ICRC transferred to the humanitarian plane a case in which all political action had ended in a dead-lock, throws an interesting light on the instruments which are in the hands of the Committee.

IX. Repatriation of Prisoners of War for Reasons of Health, and their Accommodation in Neutral Countries

(A). REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR FOR REASONS OF HEALTH

1. General measures taken by the ICRC

From the outbreak of hostilities, the repatriation of seriously wounded or sick PW formed part of the main activities which the ICRC set itself to carry out in behalf of war victims. This intention was notified to the belligerent States on September 4, 1939, in the first circular letter addressed to them.

In its Memorandum of October 21, 1939, the ICRC defined its views on the possibility of agreements to improve in some degree the position of war victims during hostilities. The ICRC expressed these views as follows :

The Final Act of the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 includes a recommendation that further guarantees shall be enacted in behalf of the seriously wounded and the seriously sick who may have fallen into enemy hands.

In the meantime, the belligerent Powers may arrange for the exchange of the seriously wounded and the seriously sick by reference to the Model Draft Agreement, annexed to the PW Convention, Art. 68, for purposes of information. The ICRC has been informed that certain Protecting Powers have already taken steps towards a provisional application of the said Model Draft Agreement. It expresses the hope that an understanding on this subject may be reached without delay, and is itself ready to act as intermediary to this end.

The British, French and German Governments made known that they were ready, subject to reciprocity, to apply the Model Draft Agreement without amendment.

The repatriation of the seriously wounded or sick involved the preliminary consent and help of the neutral Powers through whose territory transit would be necessary. The ICRC, therefore, recommended to the Swiss Government that it should make proposals on these lines. That Government shortly afterwards drew up an offer that met with the approval of the States to which it was addressed.

The number of PW had greatly increased since the launching of operations in the West, and the ICRC took the initiative in July 1940, in opening negotiations with Germany and Great Britain for a ferry service between the two countries for the repatriation of the seriously wounded or sick. Negotiations for the actual repatriation were dealt with by Switzerland in its capacity of Protecting Power. The task of establishing with the two belligerent Powers a method for the repatriations was assumed by the ICRC. The use for this purpose of hospital ships which had to cross the Channel—a declared war zone—or of ambulance planes, led to a divergence of opinion between the British and German Governments. This caused great delay, and required much prolonged negotiation on the part of the ICRC. A serviceable understanding was finally reached as to cross-Channel repatriation, to start on October 1, 1941.

The help of an ICRC delegate was sought by the German Government, which also asked Geneva to give its support in London to a German proposal, that the vessel detailed for the work of repatriating the seriously wounded or sick should equally be used for the transport of German women and children in Great Britain who might be anxious to return to their own country. This proposal, which the German Government thought justified, owing to the disproportionate numbers of the respective PW due for repatriation (1,600 British against 50 Germans) was accepted by the British Government. The exchange was to take place at Dieppe. At the last moment, when part of the repatriates had already left their camps, the German Government demanded that the number of Germans returning to the

Reich should be equal to that of the British returning to England. This demand for an exchange on a *per capita* basis wrecked the negotiations, deeply affecting the morale of the sick and wounded and bringing to a dead-lock all discussions relative to further repatriations.

It should, however, be placed on record that, in general, the delays in repatriation were not solely to be attributed, as in the setback at Dieppe, to subjective causes. Real difficulties frequently arose, in connection with the practical organization of any convoys. This was especially due to the great number of PW, the problems of transport, the character of the military operations, the small number of neutral States, and the great distance of certain countries where PW were held. These delays often had serious effects on the moral and physical condition of the sick and wounded. The ICRC strove to remedy this state of things by facilitating the despatch of artificial limbs to the disabled, and by arranging for handicrafts for the invalids who could not be sent home, although their state of health, under the terms of the Model Draft Agreement, would have allowed the Mixed Medical Commissions¹ to declare them as eligible for repatriation.

At the end of 1941, the overtures by the ICRC in behalf of the seriously sick or wounded PW in Germany and Great Britain had not achieved any positive results. In 1942, however, the ICRC had the satisfaction of seeing that the German authorities, following on its earnest representations, were beginning to repatriate the Yugoslav sick and wounded. Repeated efforts of the ICRC hastened the rate of repatriations to Yugoslavia.

The distress of the sick and wounded who saw their repatriation deferred, moved the ICRC to consult with the Swiss Government on several occasions as to the right moment to make new attempts to find a remedy. In the course of this correspondence the Swiss Government pointed out that negotiations were becoming more and more difficult, because of the state of mind created in the belligerents by the alleged reprisals taken on both sides against PW.

¹ See p. 386.

Finally, negotiations were resumed through the medium of Switzerland as Protecting Power. Since the number of prisoners had reached a more equal level as between Great Britain and Germany, these steps were made easier, ending in the repatriations of Gothenburg, Barcelona and Oran, in 1943.

Repatriations of British and Italian disabled also took place at Smyrna and Lisbon in 1942 and 1943.

These operations were, however, incomplete, and the ICRC did not relax in its efforts to make exchanges of the seriously sick or wounded between the belligerents more frequent and more regular.

Following on discussions which took place on November 18, 1943, between Count Bernadotte, then Vice-president of the Swedish Red Cross, and the ICRC, these two bodies addressed fresh appeals to the belligerents in January 1944, asking them to leave nothing undone to hasten the rate of repatriations. The Swedish note proposed a meeting of representatives of the belligerent States in order to have discussions and remove the obstacles which prevented, or greatly delayed, the carrying out of further repatriations. Among these obstacles, the note cited the fear of the belligerents that certain repatriates, although invalided, might again be employed in industries considered as indirectly promoting the war effort, even though there could be no breach thereby of Art. 74, which prohibits the employment in the Forces of repatriated invalids who have since regained health.

At the same time, the ICRC wrote to the British, German and United States Governments, on January 17, 1944, followed by a memorandum to all the belligerent Governments in the same terms. These notes insisted that the Powers should support the reciprocal exchange of the seriously wounded and sick. We quote the following extracts from this memorandum of February 15, 1944 :

(a) The ICRC has always considered that the return of the disabled to their homes is the best solution from the humanitarian standpoint and the one most ardently desired by the men themselves. In this connection, the Committee has the following comments to make :

In the first place, it is most desirable that, in obedience to the Convention of 1929, reciprocal repatriations should be carried out as speedily

as possible after the Medical Commissions have made their decisions. Long delays are harmful to the physical health and morale of the sick and wounded, whose condition has already been recognized as serious.

It is, moreover, proper to continue with reciprocal repatriations covering the total number of the prisoners qualified in each country, regardless of their numbers. It is important that all PW eligible for repatriation on grounds of health, shall benefit by the said arrangement, without any limitations imposed by the exchange of an equal number of prisoners on either side, a contingency which the 1929 Convention, moreover, expressly excludes.

(b) The repatriations should include the widest categories possible, so that they cover not only *ratione personae* (PW and civilian internees), but also *ratione conditionis* (wounds, disease, age, prolonged captivity, and mental cases, in which class should be included captivity psychosis).

The Memorandum also recalled the letter which the ICRC had addressed in August, 1943, to those belligerent States most directly concerned. In this note it had called their attention to the option offered by Article 72 of the 1929 Convention to conclude agreements for repatriation or for accommodation in neutral countries of PW in good health, who have been in captivity over a long period.

Discussions between the belligerents were then resumed, and resulted some months later in new exchanges at Barcelona, Gothenburg and Constance. The delegates of the ICRC, at the request of the States concerned, co-operated in these exchanges.¹ Towards the end of the war, the ICRC succeeded in organizing on its own account and carrying through an exchange of seriously wounded and sick between France and Germany, through Switzerland.

2. Role of the ICRC in actual operations

The ICRC was called upon to give practical help in the various operations of repatriation of seriously sick and wounded PW which developed from 1942 onwards. Previous repatriations were effected direct between Germany and the occupied countries, the intermediary of a neutral agency not having been considered necessary.

¹ See below.

In March, 1942, the ICRC was informed by the British and Italian Governments that the *first exchange* of seriously sick and wounded would take place on April 7 at Smyrna. These Governments requested the ICRC to arrange for one of its delegates to accompany each of the hospital ships detailed to carry the repatriates of the respective countries to Smyrna. The belligerent authorities concerned were anxious that the representatives of a neutral agency should see that the operations on both sides were carried out as arranged, in agreement with the nominal rolls of candidates, and in suitable conditions. These representatives could, in case of need, lend useful assistance as intermediaries between the Authorities and the PW, as interpreters or even as doctors. Although only short notice was given, the Committee was able to have these ships escorted by two delegates. The representative at Ankara was instructed to travel to Smyrna and help with this exchange, by putting himself at the service of his colleagues and the Turkish authorities.

When submitting the report of its delegates on their work, the ICRC requested the States concerned to communicate to it, as speedily as possible, their plans for future repatriations. The ICRC was anxious to be able to take due measures in time and to instruct its delegates. In the same communication, the Committee alluded to the treatment of the PW at the time of repatriation, in the course of which 340 Italian disabled were exchanged for 60 British.

One year later, the co-operation of the ICRC was once more requested for the *second repatriation* between Britain and Italy, which took place partly at Smyrna and partly at Lisbon. Delegates accompanied the convoys from Egypt to Turkey, from England to Lisbon, and from Italy to the points of exchange. They took note of various complaints of the men concerning the treatment which they received, either during the journey or in PW camps. These complaints were forwarded by the ICRC to the authorities responsible.

At Smyrna, 150 British seriously sick and wounded and 200 members of protected personnel were exchanged for 199 Italian disabled and twelve members of medical personnel; at Lisbon 409 Italian prisoners were exchanged for 450 British.

When the *third repatriation* took place, also at Smyrna, in May, 1943, 2,411 Italian disabled were exchanged for 400 British.

The *fourth repatriation*, carried out on June 2, 1943, at Smyrna, provided an exchange of 2,676 Italian PW (447 disabled, 2,229 members of protected personnel), against 435 British (142 disabled, 293 members of protected personnel).

The *fifth repatriation* should have taken place in September 1943, but was upset by the event of the armistice in Italy. The British PW, 115 in number, who were on the point of leaving Italy for Lisbon, were in the end sent to Germany, whence their repatriation met with all kinds of difficulties. The German PW (479 disabled, 40 merchant seamen, 21 civilian internees, 7 women and children repatriated without having been interned, 8 German civilians) were disembarked at Lisbon. The Italians, for whom conditions of reciprocity were lacking, were not able to land at Lisbon, and were diverted to Algiers, from which port they later reached their own country.

The *sixth repatriation*, the first one effected between Great Britain and Germany, took place in October 1943, at Gothenburg, Barcelona and Oran.

As in the case of preceding exchanges, the co-operation of the ICRC was only required from the time of leaving the ports of assembly and embarkation, and secrecy was required up to the moment of the men's reaching the ports of exchange.

Concerning the repatriation at Oran, the role of the delegates consisted simply in visiting the assembly centre, in helping with the embarkation, and in serving as intermediaries between those in charge of the convoy and the North African authorities. The delegate of the ICRC in Madrid was also instructed to assist in the exchange at Barcelona, and to give his colleagues in the convoys all possible aid.

At Gothenburg the exchange took place of 4,159 British (2,658 disabled, 1,244 members of protected personnel, 152 merchant seamen and 105 civilian internees) against 832 Germans, (403 disabled, 199 members of protected personnel, 176 merchant seamen and 54 civilian internees).

At Barcelona, there was an exchange of 1,057 Germans (401 disabled, 608 members of protected personnel, 48 civilian

internees), against 1,036 British (582 members of protected personnel, 454 disabled).

At Oran, 3,876 Germans were embarked (342 disabled, and 3,534 members of medical personnel).

The *seventh repatriation* took place at Barcelona on May 17, 1944. The German Government had consented to the convoys of British PW being accompanied to the place of exchange by ICRC delegates, and asked that steps should be taken to have the German PW likewise accompanied. The German Government further requested the ICRC to procure the list of the men eligible for repatriation who were in North Africa in the hands of the French Forces. The British Government having consented, the ICRC sent one of its delegates in North Africa to accompany the German PW, to be assembled in Africa, as far as the place of exchange. As the hospital ship had been chartered by the American Government, the latter's agreement was equally necessary.

The role of the delegate acting as escort to the convoys from Algiers to Barcelona was defined in written instructions, which can moreover be considered as applying to all the repatriations.

The delegates were to act as follows :

- (1) Request and obtain two copies of the nominal rolls of the PW.
- (2) Travel to the place of assembly of the PW, assist in their embarkation, and verify that all PW named in the lists were really put on board.
- (3) See that all useful measures were taken to carry out the transfer in the best material conditions possible.
- (4) Serve as intermediary between those in charge of convoys and the PW, and if necessary act as interpreter.
- (5) Travel with the PW as far as the point of exchange. Exchange lists with his colleagues accompanying the convoy from the adverse country. Offer his services to the official in charge of the convoy and the authorities of the neutral country where the exchange took place, in order to help forward the practical business of the exchange.
- (6) During operations, see that all PW named in the lists were in fact exchanged.
- (7) Wire to Geneva as soon as possible all relevant information concerning the number of men exchanged, and give a brief account of the work done.

(8) Accompany the convoy on the return journey and hand over to the official in charge the list of repatriates. Send to Geneva a complete report with the list of repatriates.

The number of disabled men repatriated in the course of these operations was the following : American and British : 1,043 (979 disabled and merchant seamen, 64 civilian internees) ; Germans : 900 disabled and members of medical corps.

The German PW in the hands of the French Forces were included in the scheme of repatriation, without any equivalent being demanded.

When the *eighth repatriation* took place, at Gothenburg, on September 8 and 9, 1944, the following were exchanged : 2,136 German nationals (1,553 PW, including 83 merchant seamen, and 34 Sisters of the German Red Cross, 583 civilian internees), and 2,560 Allied national (1,988 PW, 583 civilian internees, 83 merchant seamen).

The *ninth repatriation* was exceptional, inasmuch as it was carried out through Switzerland and organized exclusively by the ICRC, in the absence of a Protecting Power for French interests in Germany and for German interests in France. The ICRC received a request of the French authorities, who wished to exchange seriously sick and wounded German PW held by them in Savoy and Upper Savoy against seriously wounded French in German hands. The Germans agreed and suggested Constance as the place of exchange, and November 1, 1944, as the date. The ICRC asked for the permission of the Swiss Government for the transit across Swiss territory, and requested it to supply the necessary ambulance trains.

This repatriation took place approximately on a *per capita* basis (863 Germans for 841 French). A delegate of the ICRC accompanied the convoy as far as Constance, and helped in the exchange.

Negotiated by Switzerland as Protecting Power, the *tenth repatriation* took place at Kreuzlingen in January, 1945. The ICRC was requested by the respective home countries to provide an escort by delegates for convoys from Marseilles to Geneva, and in Germany as far as Constance. Five thousand German PW

were exchanged for 2,500 Allied prisoners, as well as a certain number of civilians.

Finally, a repatriation between France and Germany of seriously wounded and sick, of medical personnel and civilian workers, was in course of negotiation by the ICRC, at the time when military events and the capitulation of Germany made its co-operation superfluous.

The French Government wished to include in this repatriation those French generals whose attendance before the Mixed Medical Commissions Germany would not authorize, and men of colonial origin, who were unable to endure the climate of Germany.

The ICRC desires to pay a special tribute to the National Red Cross Societies of neutral countries who, at the time of the exchanges, lent their good offices and gave invaluable aid to the repatriates.

(B). ACCOMMODATION IN NEUTRAL COUNTRIES OF SERIOUSLY SICK OR WOUNDED PRISONERS

In addition to the direct repatriation of the seriously sick or wounded, the Convention of 1929 makes provision for the possible accommodation in neutral countries of those PW whose recovery can be expected within a year, and of those whose health seems likely to be gravely impaired by further detention.

Under the terms of Art. 68, the belligerents must determine by agreements the forms of disablement or sickness which warrant either repatriation or accommodation in a neutral country. Pending the conclusion of such agreements, the belligerents may refer to the Model Draft Agreement annexed to the Convention, which provides for both courses. It is known that a majority of the belligerent Powers agreed to implement the Model Draft Agreement for the repatriation of sick and wounded ; they declined, however, to put into practice the provisions for accommodation in neutral countries, despite the efforts made towards this end by the ICRC.

In November, 1939, the ICRC was given an assurance by the

Swiss Government that it was ready to receive on its territory PW eligible for accommodation in accordance with decisions of the Mixed Medical Commissions, and in conditions later to be agreed upon. This offer had been transmitted to the British, French and German Governments. In the first instance it was accepted by the States concerned. Germany, however, revoked its acceptance, and took steps through the Protecting Power as intermediary, to obtain the consent of the British and French Governments to give up the accommodation in neutral countries, and repatriate those PW who, under the terms of the Model Draft Agreement, would have benefited by such accommodation. On May 29, 1940, the ICRC was officially informed by the German Foreign Office that Great Britain, on reconsideration, reserved her decision, but that France accepted the German proposal to extend direct repatriation to the men eligible under the Model Draft Agreement for accommodation in neutral countries.

In the view of the German Government, it was preferable that the disabled should be cared for in their own country, where all the necessary equipment was available ; furthermore, the accommodation in neutral countries of a large number of service men would be a heavy charge on the currency exchange. During May, 1941, the British Government also accepted the repatriation, without distinction, of all PW covered by the provisions of the Model Draft Agreement.

Two years later, the ICRC once more urged the belligerent Powers to carry out the scheme of accommodation in neutral countries of various categories of PW. In a circular letter to these Powers dated July 30, 1943, the following is of particular interest.

During the course of the present war, no attempt has been made to apply the provisions for accommodation in neutral countries, since certain belligerents had agreed to proceed with the repatriation of those categories of prisoners as well, whom the Model Draft Agreement makes eligible for accommodation. This particular repatriation however was only partially achieved.

. . . It seems that it would be highly advantageous to have recourse to this solution once more, as in 1914-18. On the one hand, it would ensure adequate medical treatment for many prisoners—who cannot

have, in captivity, the care demanded by their state of health—even in cases where the conditions required for their repatriation are not all fulfilled. Accommodation in neutral countries might, on the other hand, apply to a category of PW far wider than that actually indicated for repatriation: it would furnish a guarantee to belligerent States, independently of the provisions of Art. 74 of the Convention, that PW should not, after recovery, render within their country any services promoting the war effort.

In addition to this, the note proposed the conclusion of agreements between the belligerents, in accordance with Art. 72 of the Convention, for the accommodation in neutral countries of certain classes of PW who had been subject to a long period of captivity. This would apply particularly to the older men, for whom conditions of life in camp were very difficult to bear. The ICRC stated its readiness to lend its aid in carrying out these proposals.

On August 23, 1943, the ICRC asked for the co-operation of various neutral States. In the note addressed to the Irish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish Governments, it wrote:

. . . "The ICRC has been led to the conclusion that the accommodation in neutral countries of sick and wounded PW—a procedure, apart from repatriation, also provided for in the Convention—is in present circumstances an urgent necessity.

. . . The accommodation in neutral countries which, in the spirit of the Convention of 1929, involves the co-operation of neutral States in the effort to assuage the sufferings of war, clearly demands, as a necessary condition of its realization, that the neutral States agree in principle to receive on to their territory the seriously wounded or sick. Such accommodation is thus dependent on the sanction and cooperation of neutral countries".

Sweden replied that she could receive only a limited number of war-disabled. Turkey declared that she was not at that time in a position to give any assurance of accommodation.

The replies from the belligerent States did not allow expectation of any early solution to this problem.

The British Government observed that the question put no longer applied, since the men in Great Britain and in Germany who were qualified for accommodation in neutral countries had just been repatriated, a course which in its view was the best solution.

The United States Government also expressed its preference for direct repatriation of sick and wounded service-men, pointing out that it had submitted to enemy countries proposals aiming at repatriation of PW coming within category "B" of the Model Draft Agreement annexed to the 1929 Convention.

As regards the men who had been subject to a long period of captivity, the British Government said that it was studying the possibility of submitting proposals on this score to the German Government. The United States Government did not think it opportune to negotiate for the repatriation or accommodation of this class of PW.

Subsequently, the ICRC took up the whole question in its Memorandum of February 15, 1944, addressed to Governments of belligerent States :

Accommodation in neutral countries is advocated as an alternative solution for those persons whose captivity should be brought to an end on humanitarian grounds, and for those whom, for military reasons, the States cannot agree to repatriate.

. . . Certain belligerent States appear inclined to oppose repatriation of the disabled, because the latter might, once back in their country, take employment, not indeed military (since this is prohibited by the Convention), but which would nevertheless amount to indirect participation in the war effort.

Moreover, there would be a real advantage in having recourse to accommodation in neutral countries of men over a certain age who have been detained for a long period, for those at least amongst them whom the Powers consider it not possible to repatriate.

Accommodation in neutral countries would offer to belligerents a guarantee that the PW concerned could not possibly render any service to their country of origin.

As we have seen above ¹⁾, this Memorandum and a similar communication by the Swedish Red Cross greatly facilitated the agreements which brought about the repatriations from Gothenburg, Barcelona and Constance.

The question of accommodation in neutral countries remained, however, without any practical settlement, since the belligerent States shared the opinion that direct repatriation was the solution in the best interest of the seriously sick or wounded.

¹⁾ See p. 376.

(C). CONSTITUTION, STATUS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MIXED
MEDICAL COMMISSIONS

Art. 69 of the 1929 Convention provides that in each belligerent country Mixed Medical Commissions ¹ shall be set up, charged with the examination of sick and wounded prisoners and with giving a ruling on their repatriation. They shall consist of three members, two of whom shall belong to a neutral country, and one appointed by the Detaining Power. The Convention does not however lay down which authority shall appoint the neutral members of the MMC. In many cases, the belligerents laid this task upon the ICRC. It also occurred that these appointments were made conjointly by the ICRC and the Swiss Government, in its capacity of Protecting Power. In other cases, Switzerland alone dealt with the appointment of the neutral members.

The lack of precision in the Convention concerning the authority responsible for the appointment of the MMC gave rise to uncertainty as to the procedure to be followed for setting them up.

On noticing that this question threatened the formation of some of these Commissions, the ICRC addressed itself to the belligerent Powers, proposing such appointments or, advising them to form these bodies. Whenever it had the duty of appointing neutral members, this was laid upon it sometimes at the direct instance of a Power, sometimes following on its own initiative.

On each occasion that it had to appoint neutral doctors, the ICRC began to search, either direct or through its delegations abroad, for doctors having the professional qualifications needed and able to offer sure guarantees of impartiality and judgment.

This was no slight task, when the small number of neutrals is considered, and the fact that qualified doctors are rarely inclined to leave their practice for any length of time. The names of neutral members were then submitted for approval

¹ Abbreviated to "MMC".

to the Powers concerned ; their reply was communicated either direct to the ICRC or to the Detaining Power through the channel of the Protecting Power. The neutral doctors were in general Swiss already living in the country in which they were asked to carry out their duties. In order to facilitate the work of the Commissions, substitutes were often appointed at the outset.

Sometimes, however, it was not possible to find qualified neutral candidates on the spot, nor to bring them from Switzerland. On such occasions the ICRC called upon neutral members of a Commission working in a neighbouring country (Canada, British East Africa). In other cases, the Commission was made up of two doctors of the detaining Power and one neutral only (India) ; of one doctor of the detaining Power and one neutral having a dual vote (French, North Africa) ; or even of three nationals of the Detaining Power (Australia).

Divergences of this kind from the Convention were of course submitted for the approval of the opposing side.

The 1929 Convention does not in any way define the *status* of the neutral members. They cannot be considered as subordinate to the ICRC or to a Protecting Power. Nor do they hold any mandate from the belligerent Powers. Thus they are commissioners *sui generis*, enjoying considerable autonomy, whose functions and authority derive from the Convention and the Model Agreement annexed to it, in default of any special agreement between the belligerents concerned. The parts played by the ICRC and by the Protecting Power end with the appointment of the members. The two neutral doctors on each Commission cannot accept instructions from any source, concerning the manner in which they carry out their task. They are guided only by the principles approved amongst the belligerents concerned, by their medical knowledge and by their professional etiquette. Being neither the agents of the ICRC nor of the Protecting Power, there is no one to whom they have to render account of their work.

This peculiar situation created real problems. Since the Commission are subordinate to no one, their plan of work is not

co-ordinated, and the criteria serving as a basis for repatriation were not invariably the same. Thus, several Commissions were charged with using excessively severe standards. The German Government even called for a check on the work of the Commissions; this however proved impracticable, since no formal agreements existed.

In November, 1943, during a visit to Germany and Switzerland, Count Bernadotte, then Vice-President of the Swedish Red Cross, had occasion for talks in Berlin with the competent Reich officials, who had various criticisms to offer as regards the working methods of the Commissions. It was a matter of doubt in Germany whether or no all the belligerents observed the same criteria for repatriation. There was complaint that repatriations benefited a greater number of British PW than of German. It was suggested that the various Commissions be subject to one single control, that of the ICRC, for instance, to whom they should communicate the results of their work and send the lists of PW qualified for repatriation. Furthermore, the principles of guidance for the Commissions should be made uniform.

The ICRC, to whom Count Bernadotte transmitted the German criticism and suggestions, recognized the need to improve the efficient working of the Commissions by defining the rules for their guidance. Count Bernadotte, on his part, informed the belligerents of the need for placing the Commissions under one organ of control, which might, for instance, be the ICRC.

In its Memorandum of February 15, 1944, the ICRC proposed certain measures to improve the efficiency and working conditions of the Commissions. It set forth in particular the following :

It would be useful to co-ordinate the work of the various Commissions, to standardize their working conditions and to establish uniform criteria of selection to serve as a basis for repatriation. The disadvantages caused by the present situation have been pointed out to us on several occasions, and there is reason to believe that they have tended towards reducing the number of PW hitherto repatriated.

To achieve the aim in view, a neutral agency might be called upon to assemble the results of the examinations made by the various MMC, to

institute comparisons and point out the divergences to these Commissions. To this end, the neutral agency appointed would draw into its service neutral experts especially qualified.

The Swedish Red Cross has proposed that this agency should be the ICRC. The latter does not wish in any way to prejudice the decision of the Powers concerned. Should it be asked to assume this task, it would endeavour to render the service expected of it.

Finally, the ICRC holds that the legal status of the MMC should be established, as well as the material conditions in which their work is to be carried out.

The fact that these Commissions are responsible to no constituted body, and that the terms of service are not duly defined, varying as they do from one region to another, does create material disadvantages.

In order more easily to find a solution to these different problems, it is proposed that the qualified representatives of the Governments concerned should meet in a neutral country. A meeting of the Chairmen of certain of the MMC has also been suggested. Should this project take shape, in spite of the technical difficulties involved, and should it be considered useful for such meetings to be presided over by a neutral body, the ICRC would also in this instance be ready to give any help required. It seems, however, vital that the meetings of such conferences should not have any delaying effect on the repatriations.

Should practical difficulties stand in the way of such meetings, the ICRC might attempt to unify the methods of work of the MMC by correspondence, and to lay down uniform criteria serving as a basis for repatriation and accommodation in neutral countries.

The meeting proposed by the ICRC could not take place, as the belligerents showed no inclination to accept the idea. Nevertheless, certain improvements were brought about in the working of the Commissions by an exchange of information amongst them, in particular through the ICRC as intermediary.

During the course of the war, decisions of the MMC were not always observed by the Detaining Powers.

Thus, in Italy, at the time of the armistice of September 8, 1943, there was a large number of British PW who had previously been passed as eligible by the MMC working in that country, but who were still waiting to be sent home. When the German forces occupied the whole of Northern Italy, they carried off these prisoners, who were sent to camps in Germany. During the following autumn and winter of 1943-44, the ICRC carried on lengthy negotiations with the German authorities, calling upon them to recognize the decision taken by the MMC in Italy in

regard to these men. Finally, the Germans decided to excuse them from further examination by a MMC in Germany, and allowed them to form part of the first convoy of repatriates in 1944.

The ICRC intervened once more with success, when the German authorities refused to give sick members of protected personnel the benefit of the Articles of the Convention providing for examination by a MMC of seriously sick or wounded.

The work of the Commission provoked criticism on the part of the men themselves. They sometimes complained of not being examined by a MMC, which was content to make decisions after consulting the records presented, since time was too short to allow examination of the numerous candidates. The doctors held, moreover, that the patient's records, the result of a long series of observations, offered better surety than a single examination. The ICRC, anxious on this score, advised belligerent Governments in its memorandum of February 15, 1944, to try to increase the number of Commissions, whenever this should be warranted by the number of candidates. Furthermore, the doctors should be given sufficient time to undertake thorough examinations.

Following on applications from Red Cross Societies and next of kin, the ICRC asked to be supplied with the lists of the men eligible for repatriation, as drawn up by the MMC, but it met with a refusal from the Governments of the British Commonwealth. These stated that the lists had already been furnished to the Protecting Power, in agreement with the German and Italian Governments, and that it seemed superfluous to circulate them to still another body.

In spite of the definite part assigned to the MMCs by the 1929 Convention, certain countries thought it legitimate to make the repatriation of sick and wounded PW subject to other agencies.

Thus, shortly after the Franco-German armistice of 1940, an agreement was made at Wiesbaden between France and Germany providing for exceptions to the procedure of examining sick and wounded French PW. The practical result of this agreement was, in most cases, to withhold candidates for

repatriation from the visit of an MMC, set up according to the Convention.

Having noted that the German authorities had the final decision on repatriation, the French Government informed the ICRC that, although the Wiesbaden agreement might lead to the supposition that France had renounced the offices of MMC, the Government thought that French PW should not be deprived of the benefit of Articles 68 and following. The Government emphasized that the German Armistice Commission had confirmed in writing that the visits would be made solely by German doctors, and that this course was inadmissible in the eyes of the French Government.

Consequently, the ICRC was asked to mediate in order that the MMC should be allowed to resume their work.

The ICRC, in reply, stated that it was not competent to pronounce on any amendments to the Geneva Conventions that the Powers might agree to make without its concurrence, but took the action asked of it.

The German Government replied that it considered itself at all times bound by the 1929 Convention, and that it would in future in no way disregard the offices of the MMC. These offices, however, could not be considered until the seriously wounded or sick French already nominated by the German doctors had been repatriated.

Following on a new request from the authorities, the ICRC asked the German Government to define its attitude. The reply was that the German doctors used great latitude in judging cases of wounds and sickness involving the repatriation of PW unfit for military service for at least one year ; therefore only a small number of the prisoners anxious for repatriation on grounds of health were presented to the MMC.

The ICRC were later able to note that when repatriation had been refused by the German doctors, the French camp doctors could request that these controversial cases should be submitted to the MMC, through the medium of the Scapini Commission.

This procedure, application of which was difficult at the outset, finally became a matter of routine. It was also extended to

Belgian PW, at the request of the ICRC, who saw in it a useful means of easing their lot.

At the end of the war, the ICRC called a meeting of former neutral members of the MMC who were in Switzerland. It pooled their suggestions and opinions, and made these a basis of its studies for revising the 1929 Convention, concerning repatriation of the seriously sick or wounded, their accommodation in neutral countries, and the working of the MMCs.

(D). APPLICATION AND REVISION OF THE MODEL DRAFT AGREEMENT

At the end of 1942, with the support of a few colleagues, Colonel A. d'Erlach, the neutral chairman of a MMC, who had worked ceaselessly and effectively for the Commissions, suggested that the ICRC should call a meeting on neutral territory. The object was to be a revision of the Model Agreement—of which he submitted a new draft—after the experience gained in total warfare.

Furthermore, when the question of repatriation and accommodation in neutral countries came up in talks with the Swedish Red Cross¹, the ICRC used this occasion also for debating the future revision of the Model Agreement. The ICRC stressed that this Agreement no longer served in certain conditions inseparable from total warfare, and further that the whole scheme was thrown out of line by the fact that the belligerent States seemed to have given up the scheme for accommodation in neutral countries, as provided for by the Model Agreement.

Conscious of the material difficulties which seemed to accompany the revision of the Model Agreement, the ICRC was further anxious that this revision should not bring to a standstill the progress of other more urgent matters, such as increasing the rate of repatriation. This was pointed out in the memorandum of February 15, 1944. Moreover, the growing mutual

¹ See p. 389.

mistrust of the belligerents, as a result of protracted warfare, made a general solution of the difficulties confronting the MMC still more arduous. A meeting in a neutral country of members of the Commissions turned out to be impossible, as mentioned above, for technical and political reasons.

The MMC in Germany, at the instance of Colonel d'Erlach, then had recourse to a new method of approach. They sought to obtain the application of uniform criteria in respect of definite types of wounds or diseases, and forwarded proposals in this sense to the Chairmen of the Commissions in enemy countries, by way of the Protecting Power or the ICRC.

The decisions made by the majority of members of Commissions in Canada, Great Britain, Germany and the United States were then forwarded to the ICRC, with a request to communicate these findings to the chairmen of the MMC in Africa, Australia, Egypt and India, so that all the Commissions might apply uniform standards.

These steps brought about a series of agreements in relation to certain classes of disease, which from that time onwards were held to be grounds for repatriation, although not defined in the Model Agreement.

These agreements were ratified by Great Britain on October 12, 1944, by the United States on January 21 1945 and by Germany on March 2, 1945.

Lastly, we recall that the ICRC, wishing to draft the text of a Model Agreement in the light of the experience gained during hostilities, convened a Sub-committee in Geneva, in May 1946. This was composed of certain neutral members of the MMC who were specialists in the more important branches of their profession. This Sub-committee, presided over by Colonel d'Erlach, worked out a draft Model Agreement, which is to form an annex to the revised 1929 Convention, to be submitted to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

X. Repatriation of Prisoners after the close of hostilities

Long before the close of hostilities, the ICRC had given careful consideration to the serious problem likely to arise from the necessity of repatriating PW in considerable numbers across war-devastated countries.

On August 14, 1944, the ICRC addressed a Memorandum to all belligerent Powers, referring to the work it intended to continue, once military operations had come to an end. The Committee offered the co-operation of its services in Geneva, of its delegates in various countries, of its relief depots and transports, in order to help forward to work of repatriation of the PW and civilian exiles, when the moment should come.

At the same time, the ICRC suggested to the voluntary welfare societies who were in a position to give effectual aid in this field, as well as to certain other official organizations, that they should at once review all the resources at their disposal, for their immediate assembly at points where they would be most needed, as soon as the fighting ended. The ICRC offered further to act as an information centre, in order to ensure co-ordinated action. It also had talks with various persons who were anxious to submit plans and suggestions for the repatriation of PW and refugees.

By February, 1945, when the end of the war seemed imminent, the ICRC had reason to fear that the PW and other expatriates would set out of their own accord as soon as the firing ceased, and in advance of instructions from their own authorities, or in despite of them, thus creating serious obstruction on the roads and material difficulties in the way of food supplies.

The ICRC instructed its delegates abroad, who had already

been ordered to remain at their posts, on the part that might be assigned to them in the work of repatriation. They were also reminded of the steps which they might have to take in behalf of these people, before the Powers concerned could set up the necessary local organizations.

As the advance took its course, the Allied forces, however, liberated the PW and conveyed them home as speedily as possible. Thus the vast flow of PW which it had been feared would stream across Europe, without discipline or means of existence, did not in fact occur.

After the whole of Germany was occupied, the Allied Powers completed this task of repatriation, which was to take some time longer owing to the scarcity of transport. The ICRC was able to give help in the way of provisioning and by the loan of the trucks at its disposal ¹.

Another difficult question then arose, different in kind but also of great importance, and which became increasingly acute : the position of PW who were nationals of the Axis countries, and who were detained by the Allied Powers, although hostilities had ceased.

By agreement with the Allied authorities, the ICRC continued to give its full attention to the situation of these PW, and pursued its customary exertions in their behalf, without implying thereby that it admitted the legal justification of their further detention.

The fact had to be faced that the Detaining Powers were giving to captivity an essentially different character since the fighting stopped. Whereas, during the war, the internment of PW was justified by a natural anxiety to prevent these men from taking up arms once more against the Detaining Power, this reason no longer existed once the fighting had ceased. The Detaining Powers apparently intended to keep the PW in their hands for an unspecified period of time, in order to employ them, especially on reconstruction work.

The maintenance in captivity of PW appearing contrary

¹ See Vol. III.

to the spirit of the 1929 Convention and to the principles of humanity, the ICRC took serious steps towards hastening their repatriation.

On August 21, 1945, a Memorandum on the subject was sent to the principal Detaining Powers. After stressing certain unusual aspects of captivity which arose out of the ending of hostilities and the elimination of the German State, it made clear the following points :

It must be recalled in this connection that the duration of captivity, which depends, according to the Conventions of Geneva and the Hague, in the last resort on the conclusion of a Peace Treaty, cannot be indefinite, even though, through stress of circumstances, considerable time should elapse before such a Treaty comes into force.

On the other hand, the fact that the Detaining Powers, when disarming prisoners, may deprive them of the designation and status of prisoners of war, without allowing them to return home, cannot in the opinion of the International Committee be regarded as a normal end to captivity. This new situation, especially if it entails for those concerned the loss or reduction of guarantees recognized to prisoners of war by Convention, would on the contrary involve for them a worsening of their position.

Eleven months later, the ICRC noted that although partial repatriation had taken place, in particular of Austrian, Italian and Japanese PW, the situation in general remained as before. They therefore addressed an important Memorandum, under date of July 2, 1946, to all the States signatory to the 1929 Convention and in whose hands PW still remained. Its text was as follows, and its substance was moreover given to the press on August 12, 1946 :

The capitulation of the German and Japanese armed forces in 1945, which marked the close of hostilities in the second World War, led to millions of PW (in addition to those already in captivity) falling into the hands of the victorious Powers. During the year which followed this capitulation, many of these PW have been repatriated and discharged, but there are still large numbers whose release and repatriation have apparently not been contemplated up to the present. On the contrary, it would seem that the Detaining Powers are desirous of holding these men for an indeterminate lapse of time, in order to make use of their services for certain work, more particularly reconstruction.

Now, certain clauses of the Convention of July 27, 1929, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, have as their purpose to put an end

as rapidly as may be to the unusual situation constituted by the captivity of members of the armed forces having fallen into enemy hands.

Thus, Article 72 of the said Convention provides, for humanitarian reasons, that belligerents may conclude agreements with a view to the direct repatriation or accommodation in neutral countries of PW in good health who have been in captivity for a long time. In August 1943 already the ICRC recommended that the belligerent States most directly concerned should apply this provision.

Moreover, according to Article 75, belligerents shall enter into communication with each other as soon as possible on the question of repatriating PW at the end of hostilities, either by means of stipulations to be included in Armistice Conventions, or by *ad hoc* agreements. Furthermore, Article 75, together with Article 20 of the Regulations annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, lay down that, in any case, the repatriation of prisoners shall be carried out as quickly as possible after the conclusion of peace.

The ICRC are not aware of the inclusion of any provisions for the repatriation of PW in the acts of surrender of the German and Japanese armed forces. Moreover, up to the present, no Peace Treaty providing for the repatriation of PW has yet been concluded. Also, in the absence of representatives of one of the belligerents, the prospect of special agreements on the repatriation of PW seems distant.

The ICRC cannot but be concerned by this state of affairs, which was not contemplated by the signatories to the Convention of July 27, 1929. They are led to admit that the Detaining Powers alone are able to make unilateral decisions with a view to permitting PW to return to their respective countries.

The visits made to the PW camps by the delegates of the ICRC furnish evidence that the morale of PW is everywhere becoming increasingly depressed, owing to the uncertainty prevailing as to the duration of their captivity. It is also to be feared that the prolongation of their detention will make it more difficult for these men to re-adapt themselves to a normal way of life. While hostilities continued, they remained in hope that the end of the war would involve their release. They cannot, however, be longer sustained by this hope at the present day, since they are in entire ignorance as to the intentions of the Detaining Powers concerning them.

In these circumstances, the ICRC cannot refrain from drawing the attention of the Governments concerned to this grave problem, and express the hope that they will see their way to informing the PW they still hold, whose anxiety is daily increasing, as to the steps they propose to take, in conformity with the principles of the Convention relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War.

Profiting by the occasion of Christmas and New Year 1946-1947 to recall the distressing position of the PW as of other exiles,

the ICRC returned to this painful problem, and sent out the following appeal :

The New Year is close at hand—the second since the war ended. The whole world is longing for true Peace. At this time of the year when so many families are happily united, many human beings are still separated from their loved ones.

Hundreds of thousands of people in distress, refugees and displaced persons, fill the camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. They lead a miserable existence in promiscuous companionship. They are anxiously waiting to know when they may be allowed to return home, or emigrate to a country of their choice, to start another home. Moreover, millions of PW are still held in Africa, Asia, the Far East and nearly all European countries. Some of them have been expecting their release for some years, but this depends on the will of the victorious Powers, since they surrendered unconditionally.

The ICRC and other organizations have often intervened in favour of these refugees, displaced persons and captives. All those who can raise their voices on their behalf must do so now. Let none in this festive season forget the wretched men and women for whom hours that should be so bright will be darkened by the uncertainty of their future lot.

Besides these statements on matters of principle, the ICRC and in particular its delegates abroad gave active help, wherever necessary, in organizing and carrying out repatriations. Proposals were frequently made to the Detaining Powers, who alone had the competency and responsibility in this field, to hasten the rate of repatriations or to improve transport conditions.

In this connection, the work of the delegation in Brussels was especially in keeping with Red Cross ideals. When presenting the note of July 2, 1946, to the Belgian and Luxemburg Governments, the delegate went beyond the offer of suggestions and himself took in hand, to a certain extent, the repatriation of PW held by these two Governments. In personal contact with the Belgian authorities, he constantly stressed the gravity of the PW problem and the urgency of finding a solution. The Belgian Government thereupon decided to repatriate, from May 1947 onwards, gradually but speedily, some 50,000 German PW, who were mostly employed as miners in Belgium. As the execution of this scheme seemed to be hampered by administrative difficulties, raised by the Allied authorities of occupation in

Germany, the delegate took the initiative in making the necessary contacts to overcome these obstacles. The repatriation of the German PW in Belgium was then decided on, and the scheme was started on the date arranged.

In the course of an interview with the Government of Luxemburg, the Brussels delegate examined with their representative the question of repatriating the German PW in Luxemburg. Some days later, these talks were confirmed by a note to the Luxemburg Government, in which the arguments of the ICRC on the subject were set out. The Government was led to share these views, and shortly afterwards took the first steps towards repatriating the PW held by them.

In the Far East, when Japanese resistance was ending, the Tokyo delegation set up teams, each composed of one delegate of the ICRC, with representatives of the Japanese authorities and of the Swedish and Swiss Legations. One of these teams settled in each of the seven principal camps for Allied PW in Japan, where they did most valuable service, ensuring the continuance of food supplies and the protection of PW against harsh treatment ; note was taken of the their most urgent needs, and arrangements made for their removal to the ports of embarkation. At Singapore, in the absence of any authorities, the delegate undertook in person to negotiate with the Japanese officials for the release of the Allied PW and civilian internees in Malaya ¹.

In Czechoslovakia, following on renewed representations, the ICRC and its delegation in Prague were able to obtain the transfer of good part of the 30,000 Sudete prisoners to Germany with their families.

Thus the ICRC delegates, although hostilities had ended, continued to perform their customary duties in all the countries where PW remained. During the camp visits, they were frequently called on to explain to PW impatient to return home the reasons why the Detaining Powers did not satisfy them at once, and to acquaint them with the steps taken by the ICRC to promote general repatriation.

¹ See the chapter on the war in the Far East, pp. 442 sqq.

During these visits, the delegates also noticed that captivity beyond the end of the war, when PW had been counting on immediate return home, often had a serious effect on morale. This was so marked that they judged it necessary to ask the ICRC to take urgent steps to hasten the release of certain groups. Similar steps were taken with success, for instance, in the case of 25,000 Italian PW in British India, and of 58,000 Italian PW held in South Africa.

On learning that repatriation was due shortly, the delegates often took the opportunity to pay one more visit to the PW, either in their base camp or in the transit camps. They were thus able to collect possible complaints or requests, and submit them to the authorities. Above all, they were able to help the PW in many ways, too numerous to reckon, by issuing relief, demanding an increase in rations, forwarding messages, ensuring the fair distribution of canteen benefits, or the payment of credit vouchers for the balance of pay due on their return home. In this connection, it may be noted that the ICRC delegates were specially helpful in the despatch of excess kit to the repatriates' home country, thanks to a relay depot in Geneva. This service was much employed for Italian PW in Australia, and for Italian and German civilian internees in the United States. One may add that such last visits to PW and civilian internees due for repatriation often involved journeys accompanied by considerable risk, e.g. in China, Japan and the Pacific Islands.

The ICRC delegates also had to supervise the conditions in which PW and civilian internees were sent back home. They inspected a great many ships, specially fitted out for such transport, in particular in North Africa, the United States, Australia and the Far East. Usually too, they were present at the embarkation. In most cases, transport conditions were satisfactory, sometimes even excellent. A few times, however, the delegates had to ask for improvements to be made. There was an instance of this at Oakland (New Zealand), where the living quarters of two ships provided to repatriate 800 Japanese PW were so rudimentary that the ICRC delegate, having in mind the length of the voyage, objected to their sailing in this

condition and demanded improvements, which delayed the sailing for several weeks.

A similar supervision was exercised over repatriations by rail, either on departure or arrival ; in many cases this led to an improvement in travelling conditions. Thus the delegate in Paris suggested that the trains for the conveyance of 42,000 Austrian PW who had been held in France should run through Switzerland. This shortened the journey by three days, in conditions in every way more favourable than by any other route. The plan met with numerous difficulties in practice and principle, but was finally achieved in excellent conditions, thanks to the support of the Swiss Government authorities and the devotion of the Swiss Red Cross, which provisioned the repatriates in their journey across Switzerland. In December, 1945, the ICRC had to make urgent representations to the Hungarian and Rumanian Governments, in order to carry relief to the trains conveying Hungarian PW repatriated from Rumania, and to get them moving, after remaining blocked in the stations at the Rumanian frontier.

On many occasions the ICRC delegates did not confine themselves to supervision alone. When circumstances allowed, they accompanied the convoys in person, by land or sea, as far as the country of their destination. When this was not possible, the arrival of the convoy was usually checked at its destination by another delegate, and the latter made contact with the local authorities in order to help the repatriates on their way towards home.

The ICRC delegate in the French zone of Germany was informed that some sick German PW, recently repatriated there, had been summarily returned to civil life without receiving any attention or the means of existence. He informed Geneva, which made insistent representations to the French authorities, and these then made good the deficiencies. In the meantime, the delegate seconded by local welfare organizations, succeeded in finding food and lodging for about 40,000 repatriates.

Besides cases of collective repatriation, individual cases should be mentioned as well, i.e. the men for whose repatriation the ICRC was begged to use its influence. Applications of this

kind were made in great numbers, e.g. those concerning Italian PW held in Yugoslavia. The ICRC at all times considered that such steps were not covered by the 1929 Convention; this agreement permitted solely mediation for the return to their country of seriously sick and seriously wounded PW, and of Protected Personnel. Considering that these applications had been forwarded by Italian Government authorities, who made out that it was impossible to take the matter up themselves with the Yugoslav authorities, the delegation in Belgrade was given the task of handing in these applications and instructed to take appropriate action.

Besides acting in behalf of PW, the ICRC and its delegations played an important part as channel of information, by forwarding, either to the Detaining Power or to the home country and next of kin, numerous particulars in respect of repatriation.

At the time the present Report closes, on June 30, 1947, many PW, especially German, are still held in various countries. The exertions of the ICRC and its delegates, as they have been described, continue in behalf of these men, and will be carried on, if the means are given to it, until the moment when the last prisoner shall have reached home ¹.

Disabled PW. — Some account should be given here of the steps taken by the ICRC to make a census of disabled PW. The Committee thought that it would be useful to inform the Powers concerned of the number of disabled PW for whom they would be responsible on their return from captivity. Therefore, in December 1944, it asked the competent authorities of all detaining countries to have lists drawn up by medical officers or camp leaders, showing those disabled, either sick or wounded, who were still in captivity.

This scheme became superfluous in the case of those PW held by the Axis Powers, since these men were able to return

¹ A special section of the present Report deals with the question of PW who were made civilian workers. This transformation must in certain cases be considered as release in the country of detention, without repatriation.

home when the war ended. The Allied authorities, on the other hand, were willing to agree to this plan in principle.

In October 1945, the Committee received the lists of disabled PW in the Middle East and the United States. These nominal rolls were very carefully drawn up on the model devised by the ICRC, and included the names of three or four thousand Germans, one thousand Italians, several hundred Austrians, a small number of Czechoslovaks and Poles and some citizens of other countries. The information supplied in these lists was indexed for each individual, after the terms applying to the disease or disability, medical treatment, province of domicile, family dependants and professional status had been classified in code.

These index-cards allowed lists to be completed, by province of domicile and occupation zones, as well as by the disease or disability. The lists were then forwarded to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Italy, by agreement with the competent authorities, to the district offices who were in charge of receiving the disabled. These offices were thus able, before repatriation, to arrange for the necessary care and relief of the disabled on their return. The information proved to be of valuable service to the local authorities.

XI. The Conflicts in Eastern Europe

As has been said, the only legal basis for the welfare work of the ICRC in behalf of PW is Art. 79 and 88 of the Convention of 1929 relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, in which the Committee is specified by name. This basis is fragile enough, since it offers the ICRC no means of imposing its services. The establishment of the Central Information Agency, which it is entitled to propose to the Powers, and the other non-defined humanitarian work that the Convention leaves to its initiative, are subject to approval by the belligerents concerned.

After having shown the activities of the ICRC in behalf of PW in countries where the above treaty stipulations were in force, some account is due of the efforts made by the ICRC, what it could and could not do, whenever the said stipulations were not applicable (conflicts in Eastern Europe), or were only partially applied (conflict in the Far East). The present chapter deals with the conflicts in Eastern Europe, and the following with the conflict in the Far East.

(A). INTRODUCTION

Under the general title "Conflicts in Eastern Europe", the reader should understand : (1) the war between Russia and Poland in September 1939 ; (2) the first Russo-Finnish war in the winter of 1939-1940 ; and (3) the war between the Axis Powers and the USSR from 1941 to 1945. Not only did these three conflicts follow upon each other at brief intervals in the same area of the world, and with, on one side, the same belligerent Power—the USSR—but more important still, in so far as we

are concerned, they had a similar feature : the failure to implement the Convention of 1929 relative to prisoners of war.

It is a generally known fact that the hostilities in Eastern Europe were marked by the absence of the humanitarian safeguards which elsewhere allowed material alleviation of the invariably distressing situation of PW: exchange of lists and news, camp visits, relief supplies, etc. The reason for this state of affairs is not always known, and even if the legal aspects are familiar, surprise is expressed at what appears to be a lapse of the ICRC.

The legal situation is simple: Russia, like Finland for that matter, had not ratified the Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of PW¹. Consequently, Russia's adversaries were no more bound by the Convention in regard to that country, than the USSR was bound in regard to them. In the circumstances, the ICRC could, in theory, have washed its hands of a conflict in which the only Convention expressly defining its activities in behalf of PW was not implemented. Such a policy it did not for one moment entertain. The Committee is the guardian of humanitarian principles, the justice of which is recognized by the Red Cross, whether they are embodied or not in an international Convention ; it therefore offered its services, to the fullest extent possible, to the parties in the Eastern war. The Committee renewed its offers, repeated them insistently, and entered upon many negotiations ; but all in vain.

Failing the PW Convention of 1929, there were the Regulations annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 ; these the USSR had previously recognized, together with the Red Cross Conventions concluded before 1914. Article 15 of the said Regulations² provided for the work of Voluntary Aid Societies for the relief of PW. True, it originally referred to voluntary aid societies in the country where PW were held ; but no doubt

¹ Both parties had ratified only the Geneva Convention of 1929 for the relief of the wounded and sick in armies in the field.

² The text of this article, which the 1929 Convention repeats almost word for word, runs as follows : " Relief societies for prisoners of war, which are properly constituted in accordance with the laws of their country and with the object of serving as the channel for charitable effort, shall receive from the belligerents, for themselves and their duly accredited agents every facility for the efficient performance of their humane task, within the bounds imposed by military necessities

was ever expressed, in the course of previous wars, nor since September 1939, that the ICRC could act as an intermediary in the despatch of relief supplies to PW camps. Moreover, up to the outbreak of war, the ICRC entertained normal relations with the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. It had recognized the Alliance in 1921, as the only national Red Cross Society of the USSR; in this capacity, the Alliance was a member of the International Red Cross, and regularly paid a substantial annual contribution to the ICRC¹.

In the interval between the two World Wars, from 1919 to 1922, the ICRC had cooperated extensively with the Soviet authorities in repatriating over one million Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian PW and civilians. The conduct of these extensive operations had led in 1920 to the establishment of a permanent delegation of the ICRC in Moscow. This delegation ceased its activity only in 1937, by mutual agreement, when the circumstances which had called it into being were on the point of ending. From 1939, the Committee had a delegation in Germany which visited PW camps holding nationals of countries other than the USSR, and contributed towards the relief of these men. Subject to the permission of the Detaining Power, the ICRC would have been able to include the camps for Russian PW in its field of action.

Failing the Convention, conditions therefore appeared favourable for an amicable agreement, empowering the Committee to extend its activities to the victims of the war in Eastern Europe.

The reasons why the Committee's endeavours failed can be given only by the two chief antagonists. The ICRC, for its part, can merely adduce the facts and regretfully note that millions of PW, on both sides of the Eastern front, were deprived of the assistance which was offered them.

and administrative regulations. Agents of these societies may be admitted to the places of internment for the purpose of distributing relief, as also to the halting places of repatriated prisoners, if furnished with a personal permit by the military authorities, and on giving an undertaking in writing to comply with all measures of order and police which the latter may issue."

¹ The contribution for 1942 still reached the Committee by February 1944.

(B). FIRST PERIOD : 1939-1940

**Partial Occupation of Poland by Russia
The Russo-Finnish Conflict**

On November 30, 1939, war broke out between Russia and Finland. On December 4, the ICRC simultaneously informed both countries that it was at their disposal, especially for the exchange of news concerning PW. Furthermore, the USSR occupied since September part of the Polish territory. The ICRC therefore instructed one of its Members, M. C.J. Burckhardt, and Dr. Marcel Junod as delegate, to travel to Paris and enter into contact with the Soviet Ambassador in that city, M. Suritch. While declaring he was not competent in the matter, M. Suritch stated he would communicate the Committee's suggestions to his Government, but added that he thought inadvisable to send a delegate of the ICRC into the Polish territories occupied by the USSR. As for the Russo-Finnish conflict, he considered that this could be usefully followed by a representative of the ICRC with headquarters in Tallinn (Estonia), as the despatch of delegates to the two countries at war did not meet the wishes of his Government.

Meanwhile, another delegate sent by the ICRC stayed from December 26, 1939, to January 20, 1940, in Finland. The delegate received the assurance, on January 19, that the Finnish Red Cross was authorized to open an Information Bureau on enemy PW, as stipulated in Art. 14 of the Hague Regulations of 1907. In addition, the delegate was, by special favour, allowed to visit a clearing camp for Soviet prisoners, which left him a satisfactory impression.

The ICRC continued meanwhile its endeavours to establish contact with the Soviet authorities, in particular by a letter to M. Suritch in Paris (February 1, 1940), asking whether it would be possible for M. Burckhardt to go to Moscow to begin effective and friendly cooperation with the Russian authorities and the Red Cross Alliance. On February 24, 1940, a further letter informed M. Suritch that M. Burckhardt was going to Berlin,

and asked whether, on that occasion, he could examine with the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin the practical conditions of his journey to Moscow. In March 1940, M. Burckhardt did actually see the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, but the interview led to no tangible result. Thereupon, hostilities between Russia and Finland ceased, and these negotiations were suspended.

On the practical plane, however, a certain degree of co-operation was secured between the Red Cross Alliance in Moscow and the ICRC. As an instance, the Alliance sent to the Committee in 1939 and 1940 letters of enquiry about Polish nationals who were missing in 1939, and the Central Agency in Geneva was in many cases able to furnish the required information.

A year went past without any further official steps by the ICRC being demanded by circumstances. In April 1941, the Committee instructed Mlle. Quinche to interview Madame Kollontay, Soviet Ambassadress in Stockholm, on its behalf. Mlle. Quinche paid two visits to the Embassy, on April 2 and 4, during which the delegate explained the wish of the ICRC to send a representative to Moscow who would be accredited to the Alliance, as was the case from 1920 to 1937. In a letter dated April 23, 1941, the ICRC confirmed these steps. Thinking it essential to establish fresh contacts, the ICRC requested Mme. Kollontay to study the possible despatch of a delegation to Moscow for the purpose of discussing such matters as war refugees, relief for civilian populations and search for missing combatants and civilians. The visits to the Embassy in Stockholm were not followed up by the Soviet authorities, and the letters of April 23 elicited no response.

(C). SECOND PERIOD : 1941-1945

1. First Phase : June 3, 1941—September 1941

An event of the highest importance made the problem of relations between the Russian authorities and the ICRC still more pressing : on June 22, 1941, the German Wehrmacht, soon followed by Finnish, Rumanian, Slovak, Hungarian and Italian forces, invaded Soviet territory.

The next day, June 23, according to their custom, the ICRC notified all parties to the new conflict that it placed itself at their disposal to carry out its traditional activities. The notification addressed to the USSR Government ran as follows¹:

Telegram 6183. Geneva, June 23, 1941.

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Moscow,

The ICRC, being anxious to carry out its humanitarian task according to available means, places its services at the disposal of the Soviet Government for all cases where its intermediary according to Red Cross principles might be useful, in particular for the collection and transmission of news relating to wounded and prisoners, according to the methods working at present through the intermediary of the Central Prisoners of War Agency with all Powers at war.

The ICRC proposes following measures: the Soviet Government to establish lists of prisoners of war in good health or wounded indicating name, first name, military unit, date of birth, place of internment, state of health, and if possible, place of origin, and first name of father; same indications to be given for the dead.

All such particulars: 1) to be forwarded to the adverse parties; 2) to be notified to next of kin who apply to the ICRC for news.

To hasten the transmission of all particulars received we contemplate setting up an office and a subsidiary organization in a place most suitable for geographical reasons.

We are sending similar communications to the German, Finnish and Rumanian Governments. The fact that the USSR is not party to the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war must not form an obstacle to the execution of the above proposals, in so far as their application is approved by the parties to the conflict.

(signed) Max HUBER

The reply arrived a few days later:

Telegram from Moscow, June 27, 1941.

Huber President of the ICRC, Geneva.

The Soviet Government is ready to accept the proposal of the ICRC concerning the despatch of particulars about prisoners of war, if such indications are forwarded by the countries at war with the USSR.

(signed) MOLOTOV, People's
Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

¹ The text of this and the following telegrams has been slightly amplified in the English translation, to make it more readable.

For the first time, the Committee thus received from the Soviet authorities a reply to the proposals which it had made on several occasions since 1939 ; moreover, it was in the affirmative. M. Molotov's telegram raised the hope that henceforth Russia would adopt an attitude similar to that of all the other countries, both as regards PW and its own relations with the ICRC.

On June 27 already, Finland, Rumania and Germany, and shortly after, Hungary and Italy were notified of the acceptance of the Committee's proposals by the USSR.

On July 2, the Committee was able to inform M. Molotov that his proposals had been accepted by Finland. The Committee also asked permission for one of its delegates to get into touch with the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara, with a view to setting up in that city a relay for mail between the Central Agency at Geneva and the official PW Information Bureau in Moscow. On July 6, M. Molotov notified his agreement on the latter point, thus justifying the high hopes which were entertained at Geneva as to the successful outcome of the negotiations :

Telegram from Moscow, July 6, 1941.

The Soviet Government notifies its agreement to contacts between the International Committee and the USSR Ambassador in Ankara, to study the establishing in Turkey of a relay for despatch, subject to reciprocity, of information for the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

(signed) MOLOTOV, People's
Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

On July 9, the ICRC informed Moscow that its delegate would leave shortly for Ankara. It also notified the consent of Germany, Finland, Hungary and Rumania to an exchange of PW lists.

Telegram 6881. Geneva, July 9, 1941.

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Moscow.

Warmest thanks your wire July 6. Are planning send very shortly to Ankara our chief delegate Doctor Marcel Junod. Following on your wire June 27, we can inform you that German, Finnish, Hungarian and Rumanian Governments have sent us agreement, subject to reci-

procity, to exchange lists of prisoners of war through the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

In view of the similar response of the Soviet Government we note that the requisite conditions for the implementing of our proposal for the exchange of particulars between the USSR and these governments are fulfilled. The ICRC will communicate the replies of other belligerents upon receipt.

Dr. Junod soon afterwards left Switzerland for Turkey, via the Balkans. Before leaving Berlin by air for Istanbul, he discussed matters with the Committee's delegation in Berlin and with the German authorities. He obtained from the latter an important piece of information: the German Supreme Command (OKW) would communicate the names of PW by means of "capture cards", according to the model adopted jointly by the OKW and the ICRC. These cards, printed in German and Russian, included four identical pages, intended respectively for the OKW, the ICRC, the Protecting Power for Soviet interests (Sweden), and the Soviet Information Bureau.

Meanwhile, the ICRC had introduced Dr. Junod to M. Vinogradov, Soviet Ambassador in Ankara, by a telegram dated July 9; on the 17th, by a second wire, the Committee gave further particulars as to the significance of his mission:

Telegram 8017 Geneva July 17, 1941.

VINOGRADOV, USSR Ambassador, Ankara

In agreement with the Soviet Government to whom we applied on the outbreak of hostilities, with a view to studying practical methods of reciprocal communication between belligerents of all particulars concerning prisoners of war and wounded, we have delegated to Ankara Doctor Marcel Junod, chief delegate of the ICRC, to establish contact with your Excellency and to study practical means for receipt and transmission such information. Dr. Junod left Geneva for Ankara on July 15. We recommend him to your Excellency's kind courtesy.

On July 22, the ICRC was able to wire to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and at the same time to the Red Cross Alliance, that Italy and Slovakia in turn had agreed to exchange PW lists, subject to reciprocity, and that Italy was also disposed to apply the Convention of 1929:

Telegram 7162. Geneva, July 22, 1941.

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Moscow.

Following on our 6881, beg to inform you that Italian and Slovak Governments have sent us their agreement, subject to reciprocity, to exchange lists of prisoners and wounded. The Italian Government would moreover undertake, on condition of reciprocity, to apply in regard to USSR the other provisions of the Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war. We should be glad to learn your Government's attitude in this respect. Our delegate Dr. Junod has reached Ankara.

In reply to this notification of the Italian proposal, the ICRC received the following telegram, dated August 8, 1941, which defined the Soviet policy in regard to prisoners, wounded and sick :

Telegram, Moscow, August 8, 1941.

HUBER, President of the ICRC Geneva.

In reply your No. 7162 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs has the honour, by order of the Soviet Government, to inform you that the Soviet Government has already notified in their Note of July 17 last the Swedish Government, representing Soviet interests in Germany, that the Soviet Union considered binding upon itself the Rules of War which are set out in the IVth Convention of the Hague of October 18, 1907 concerning the laws and customs of war on land, subject to the obligatory condition that the above rules be observed during the war by Germany and her Allies. The Soviet Government agrees to the exchange of particulars about prisoners of war, wounded and sick, in the order provided for under Art. 14 of the Annex to the above Convention, and under Art. 4 of the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929 for the relief of wounded and sick of armies in the field. Regarding your communication concerning the proposal by the Italian Government to apply the other articles of the Geneva Convention of 1929 on the treatment of prisoners of war, the Soviet Government draws your attention to the fact that all the main questions of the regime of captivity are entirely covered by the above-mentioned Annex to the Hague Convention.

VYCHINSKI, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

The German Government had already been informed of the Soviet point of view through the Protecting Power. M. Vy-chinsky's reply was nevertheless communicated to the German

Red Cross, first verbally by the Committee's delegation, then in writing on August 14.

From that moment, the question arose with the Committee whether the USSR would confine itself strictly to the terms of the Hague Convention, or if it would agree to widen the scope of the said Convention in the sense of the Geneva PW Convention of 1929.

It should be noted that the Hague Convention of 1907 (referred to by M. Vichinsky) is somewhat vaguely worded as regards the points covered by the Committee's proposals concerning the establishing and forwarding of lists of prisoners of war, wounded and dead (which seemed to have been expressly approved by M. Molotov). The Hague Convention provides for the creation in each belligerent State of an information bureau, to answer all enquiries about prisoners of war. The establishing of lists and their transmission to the adverse party are not expressly stipulated. On the other hand, Art. 4 of the Geneva Convention of 1929 on the wounded and sick is not ambiguous. In particular, it states that "the belligerents shall communicate to each other reciprocally, as soon as possible, the names of the wounded, sick and dead collected or discovered", and that "they shall establish and transmit death certificates". Art. 16 of the said Hague Convention stipulates freedom of correspondence for PW, and guarantees them opportunities of receiving and sending money and parcels, free of charge.

The ICRC therefore prepared to act on the grounds of these treaty stipulations, as they had done in 1914-1918, and as it was acting at the time in respect of all the other belligerents. To be prepared for every contingency, the Central Agency at once opened a Russian Section. This Section was fairly active, although on a reduced scale, throughout the entire war ¹.

A mission composed of two members of the ICRC, M. Carl Burckhardt and M. Edouard de Haller, supporting the permanent delegation in Germany, began to examine these problems in Berlin with the German authorities. On this occasion, they were invited to visit a camp at Hammerstein, in which recently

¹ See the relevant Chapter in Vol. II.

captured Soviet PW were detained. This exceptional visit did not have the same character as the visits carried out, according to uniform rules, by the accredited delegates of the ICRC. No report was therefore written on it.

On August 9, the Soviet Embassy in Ankara transmitted to the delegate of the ICRC in that city the substance of a letter from M. Morozov, Vice-President of the Alliance, as follows :

Ankara, August 13, 1941.

The Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has the honour to inform you that, according to information received from M. Morozov, Vice-President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the URSS, the Central Prisoners of War Information Bureau has been formed under the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The above-mentioned Bureau will collect and issue all information relating to prisoners of war of the Red Army and of enemy forces ; it will despatch letters and parcels, collect and preserve all property and documents left by deceased or released prisoners of war, and forward them to their destination.

All correspondence concerning the above questions should be sent to this Bureau at the following address :

Moscow, oul. Kouibicheva 12, Central Information Bureau for Prisoner of War Affairs.

(signed) A. GEGALOVA

First Secretary to the Embassy of the USSR.

A talk which the delegate of the ICRC had at the Soviet Embassy enabled the former to place the following interpretation upon these statements : information about PW would be forwarded to Geneva, the Moscow Bureau undertaking to receive and send letters and parcels to the PW. This interpretation was perhaps too generous, and as it reached Geneva long before the original reply from M. Morozov, it contributed to entertain with the ICRC (who communicated it to the Axis Powers) the hope that the Committee's initial proposals would be promptly carried out by the Soviet authorities.

The note from the Soviet Embassy in Ankara of August 1 in no way specified whether the authorities would supply information on prisoners of war of their own accord. It said nothing about the transmission of particulars, nor about the

shape (lists, capture cards, individual cards) in which they would be sent by the Information Bureau. Meanwhile, on August 15, the ICRC sent to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs a letter and a technical memorandum about lists of prisoners of war, the use of the "capture card" and the death notice forms advocated by the Central Agency. On the same day, a copy was sent to the Alliance.

In the beginning of August, the German Embassy in Turkey informed the Committee's delegate that rumour had it that M. Stalin had warned the Russian soldiers that, if they allowed themselves to be taken prisoner of war, their next of kin would suffer reprisals. Should this rumour be confirmed, the German authorities added, this policy might justify a refusal to communicate to the USSR the names of captured PW, or to allow these men to correspond with their next of kin. The delegate was asked by the German Embassy to inform the Soviet Embassy of these views. The latter Embassy seemed highly astonished and replied that the Soviet Government had never made the statement which was attributed to M. Stalin. The delegate informed the German Embassy of this reply, but received no assurance that the German authorities considered it satisfactory, and that consequently there remained no further obstacle to the despatch of the first lists of Soviet prisoners of war.

On August 20, the Committee's delegate in Ankara informed the ICRC that he had sent to Moscow a copy of the first German list of Russian PW, that he had notified the Soviet Embassy in Ankara of the fact, and that he had wired to Moscow that the list had been sent. This list, which was handed direct to the delegate by the German Embassy in Ankara, included 300 names of Soviet PW interned in Camp 304. It was written in pencil in Russian characters on unofficial ordinary squared paper. This first "list" was also to be the last.

On August 22, the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Alliance were notified by the ICRC that Finland agreed to apply the Hague Convention, subject to effective reciprocity, and that she had opened her information bureau. On August 28, Rumania stated in turn her intention of applying the Hague Convention and of drawing up lists of Soviet PW. The other

allies of Germany, and especially Germany herself, never established their position in this respect, at all events never through, or with the knowledge of the ICRC.

On August 26, the official Soviet Information Bureau acknowledged the receipt of the telegram announcing the first list of Russian PW in Germany. They informed the Committee's delegate in Ankara that the lists made out by them would be written in Latin characters, and that the PW would be allowed to send capture cards by post to their next of kin.

Meanwhile, the delegate in Ankara continued to call frequently at the Soviet Embassy. On September 6, he notified the ICRC that the Soviet Government had been advised of the visit paid to a Russian PW camp by MM. Burckhardt and de Haller, that they appreciated the fact and asked for a report. On this occasion, the delegate took up with the Embassy the question of reciprocity to be granted by the Soviet authorities, which would have implied the despatch of a delegation of the ICRC to the USSR. Regarding the Soviet request for a report, satisfaction was given in the course of two interviews (September 19 and 25) between M. Vinogradov, Soviet Ambassador in Ankara, and M. de Haller, who was travelling to Egypt via Turkey. M. de Haller gave an account of his visit to the camp at Hammerstein, which he confirmed by a written account for M. Vinogradov. He added, however, that the visit was exceptional and almost fortuitous, that the usual rules had not been observed on this occasion, and that it had not been possible to carry it out according to the principles which usually govern camp visits made by the Committee's delegates. M. Vinogradov, upon examining photographs which were shown him of this camp visit, stated the prisoners were not members of the Soviet forces, but civilians captured during the German advance.

During these talks, M. de Haller had the opportunity of explaining the machinery for the despatch and issue of relief supplies to PW, and the control of distribution in the course of camp visits and through the co-operation of PW spokesmen and a system of receipts. He added that this machinery was already working in behalf of British and German PW, and that it gave satisfaction to the blockade and counter-blockade authorities.

He also expressed disappointment that the Committee's mission in Turkey had as yet received no lists of prisoners in the USSR.

In order to speed up the despatch of these lists, M. de Haller asked that Dr. Junod and his assistant, who spoke Russian, might receive their visas for Moscow. He pointed out that their work would consist not so much in visiting PW camps, as in seeing that the scheme for establishing lists was working satisfactorily, and in placing the wide experience acquired in this field by Dr. Junod at the disposal of the Soviet authorities. M. Vinogradov promised to support this application for visas. He also asked whether reciprocity would be granted *ipso facto*, if Dr. Junod saw German PW. Not having formal assurances from the German authorities on this point, M. de Haller could not give a definite answer. He thought, however, that such would no doubt be the case, judging by the readiness he had observed in Berlin in the month of August.

This visit was followed, on September 25, by an application for visas for the delegates nominated. The ICRC informed the Alliance of this fact and asked it to hasten the despatch of lists.

However, during a conversation which M. de Haller had at the German Embassy in Ankara, on Sept. 24, the Embassy implied that the patience of the German authorities was almost exhausted, in view of the absence of all reciprocal action by the USSR; the Embassy referred in particular to the delay in keeping their promises by the Soviet Information Bureau, as regards the sending of news by the PW themselves, and the despatch of a first list of German PW in the USSR, announced by the Alliance on August 26. In fact, the German authorities in Berlin notified the Committee's delegation that they would send no more lists, as long as there was no effective *quid pro quo*. The ICRC at once pointed out to the OKW the danger implicit in such a reply, which might make it impossible to reach any agreement with the adverse party. Unfortunately, the German authorities henceforth constantly put forward this formal decision. Nothing further could, however, be achieved, unless one of the chief belligerents concerned really came forward. The ICRC renewed their endeavours to secure such a step by the USSR, since it could no longer be expected from Germany. A

second phase of negotiations thus began, in which the ICRC, tried to induce the German authorities to adopt a more liberal attitude, and to persuade the USSR to act so as to set in motion the entire machinery of exchanges, as had been foreseen.

* * *

Meanwhile, Finland, Italy and Rumania established PW lists according to the rules laid down by the ICRC. On November 10, the Finnish Information Bureau sent off to Geneva the first ten lists of sick and wounded Soviet PW, asking the ICRC to hold them and forward them only after the arrival of corresponding lists from Moscow. On December 4, the ICRC wired to the Alliance in Moscow and the Soviet Embassy in Ankara that these lists had arrived, and notified the condition placed by Finland on their transmission.

On December 23, the Finnish Red Cross stated that it had made out 27,000 cards in respect of Soviet PW in good health. It stated its readiness to give the ICRC all information it might ask for about these men. The ICRC took note of the fact and seized the opportunity to express its wish to receive lists of these men also.

Italy, in turn, sent through the ICRC lists of PW, and stated that she would continue to do so, if reciprocity could be established. She also asked the ICRC to inform Moscow that Soviet civilian internees in Italy would receive the same treatment as those of other countries. This news was communicated on November 14 to the Alliance in Moscow and the Soviet Embassy in Ankara.

Rumania sent to Geneva, on October 6, 362 lists of PW in camps and hospitals in Rumania ; these men, it was added, were being well treated. Other lists followed. But Rumania sent a warning on October 20 that the lists would cease, unless reciprocity was ensured. On November 3, 279 of these lists were handed in Ankara to M. Vinogradov by the ICRC. But the Rumanian Red Cross, fearing that any suspension of the transmission of lists might be regarded as an act of reprisal—whereas it was to serve merely as a means of hastening the

despatch of lists of Rumanian PW by Moscow—informed the Committee that it would continue to send more lists.

The winter threatened to be very severe for the PW, and an important exchange of letters took place between the Rumanian Red Cross and the Committee as to the possibility of sending them relief supplies. Rumania being herself short of essential goods, the Committee were asked to try to procure shipments of clothing by the Soviet Government.

These negotiations could not, however, lead to any tangible result, since the very principle of sending parcels and supplies was subordinate to a previous agreement between Russia and her chief adversary, Germany. The attitude of the Soviet and German authorities regarding the matter of lists did not leave much room for hope of any such agreement.

2. Second Phase: October 1941 — Summer 1942

(a) *Endeavours of the ICRC to establish contact with the USSR.*

Faced with the German refusal to supply fresh lists of Soviet PW without any counterpart, and with the *de facto* suspension of the right to correspondence of these men, the ICRC had to make strenuous efforts to induce the Soviet authorities to implement the stipulations of the Hague Regulations relating to PW mail and relief shipments. It could be supposed that the implementing of the Regulations in this respect might compel the German authorities to make a final pronouncement for, or against the full application of the stipulations of that Convention, and ultimately to assume the responsibility of a refusal. Without changing their policy, the German authorities and the German Red Cross regularly enquired from the Committee's delegates in Berlin, and from the headquarters in Geneva, concerning possible progress achieved in this matter. At one time, it was believed that Germany would send fresh particulars. The OKW even stated on December 19, 1941, their readiness to communicate the cards relative to 500,000 PW, but refused on February 9 following to authorize camp visits and the despatch of news concerning Soviet PW, so long as reciprocity did not

exist. Meanwhile, according to information received from private sources, which reached Geneva at the time and was confirmed by press despatches, the conditions in which Soviet PW were held by the Germans were steadily deteriorating.

The Committee, concerned by this highly irregular situation, endeavoured in October 1941 to establish more direct contact with Moscow by utilizing other channels than that of Ankara ¹. Firstly, Madame Kollontay, Soviet Ambassadress in Stockholm, was twice written to by Mlle Quinche, who had been courteously received by her at the time of her mission in April ². Mlle. Quinche expressed the view that all matters in abeyance could be dealt with more easily, if the Committee could send a representative to Moscow. She asked advice of Madame Kollontay as to the best way of reaching this aim. It was still possible for a neutral delegate to travel to Moscow, whereas the fact that Switzerland was surrounded by the Axis Powers seemed, temporarily, to preclude the possibility of sending a Soviet delegate to Geneva. On November 30, Madame Kollontay replied that she had endeavoured to place the Committee's views before the Soviet authorities. There was no further answer to this step.

With similar intentions, M. Burckhardt who was in London to discuss in particular the question of shipping food supplies for PW in general through the blockade, had a first interview on December 1, followed by other contacts, with the Soviet Ambassador in London, M. Maisky ³. The letter of December 2 confirming this interview gave a précis of the discussion. After enumerating the chief steps taken by the Committee and recalling the application for visas made on September 25, 1941, for the entry of two delegates to the USSR, M. Burckhardt stated that if the two names proposed were not approved by the

¹ The German official application, communicated through Dr. Junod to the Soviet Embassy in Ankara regarding possible reprisals on next of kin of Soviet prisoners, was unfavourable to the negotiations conducted by the delegation in Ankara.

² See above, p. 408.

³ It is to this interview that reference is made below in relation to relief for Soviet PW.

Soviet authorities, he would see no objection to submitting other names, even those of nationals of neutral countries other than Switzerland, if preferred.

Following on this letter, the Chargé d'affaires of the USSR in London wrote on December 18 that a list of candidates for the post of delegate to the USSR would be considered favourably by the Soviet authorities. On January 14, 1942, after a series of communications with the Swedish Red Cross, the ICRC telegraphed to Moscow the names of six Swedish and Swiss delegates, who would be ready to leave for the USSR. Copies of this telegram were handed to M. Maisky and Madame Kollontay. The Committee never received any answer.

* * *

Besides the matter of exchange of information, the Committee endeavoured to send relief supplies to all PW, and in particular to Soviet PW in Germany. It will be remembered that, according to the Hague Regulations, PW are authorized to receive relief, in the form of parcels, free of all dues. Between the USSR and the Axis countries, the normal channel for such shipments was through Turkey and Bulgaria. The consignment of personally addressed parcels was subordinate to the knowledge that the recipients were really in captivity, and what were their addresses. Owing to the absence of lists, capture cards or any other particulars, and as a result of the silence of the respective Information Bureaux, these data were lacking. The shipment of collective parcels addressed to Governments, Red Cross or other Relief Societies had therefore to be envisaged¹. Should the issue of these supplies in the Axis countries demand supervision, the Committee's delegation in Germany (which was already doing this supervisory work on behalf of the Allies of the USSR) seemed adequate to exercise this control. Moreover, applications had been received in Geneva from the German Red Cross (who wished to send some minor consignments to their nationals, doubtless as a test case), from Finland and from Rumania

¹ Besides, the system of postal parcels is not employed in Russia.

(who were much more pressing in behalf, not of their own nationals, but of the Soviet PW they held), and these countries asked the help or intervention of the ICRC, especially in procuring the required food supplies and clothing.

Under these conditions, the Committee prepared to act as intermediary between the belligerents, to facilitate the exchange of shipments of relief supplies. War operations being conducted on Soviet territory, Russia was however unable to supply the necessary commodities, and the ICRC planned their purchase in countries having excess supplies. Here a new difficulty arose : the Allied blockade regulations only allowed the importing into Axis countries of goods whose issue to PW could be conducted under the supervision of the Committee's delegates, according to the scheme already adopted for other Allied PW in German hands. This condition was absolute ; in the absence of any delegate of the ICRC authorized to supervise distribution, no relief supplies from territories under Allied control were allowed to pass through the blockade.

Numerous facts testify to the endeavours made by the Committee to lay the foundations of a relief scheme in the Eastern European conflict ¹. By August 1941, the Committee's delegation in Berlin questioned the OKW on the subject, since they were responsible for PW. They answered on the August 30, that they saw no objection to the shipment of parcels to Soviet PW, and that they even welcomed the scheme. But they suggested that these shipments should be sent in the form of collective parcels, to be the responsibility of the camp commanders and issued by them. This suggestion did not exactly agree with the provisions of the Hague Convention ; it would, moreover, have proved unacceptable to the Allied blockade authorities. Geneva did not, therefore, regard it as a *sine qua non* condition, and it was merely recorded.

Shortly afterwards, at the end of September, the conversations took place, as has been seen, in which the scheme adopted

¹ In this General Part, questions relating to relief are dealt with only in their connection with the entire problem of relations between the ICRC, and Germany and Soviet Russia. The relief programmes themselves and the relevant steps are described in Vol. III.

by the Committee in Germany was explained to the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara. After these talks, on October 1, the ICRC offered to the Alliance in Moscow its good offices for the transmission of collective relief consignments of food and clothing to Russian PW. The Committee pointed out that they were able to make purchases on various markets for the account of the Soviet Government.

At the same time, on the basis of Art. 15 of the Hague Regulations, the Committee asked that facilities similar to those granted elsewhere, be given it for the shipment of relief supplies of the same kind to German PW in the USSR.

Simultaneously, and in expectation of an affirmative answer, the ICRC took steps with the British blockade authorities, and enquired of possible donors and suppliers about the terms upon which relief shipments to Russian PW could be made. The entry into the war of the United States temporarily altered the aspect of the problem, and the solutions contemplated were again open to question. Negotiations were thus further complicated and delayed ; they could be brought to a conclusion only in the beginning of 1942.

The Soviet authorities were kept informed of these negotiations and endeavours through conversations and letters which were exchanged in London between M. Maisky and a member of the ICRC, M. Burckhardt. The latter, in a letter dated December 2, informed the Soviet authorities that a delegate of the ICRC in Berlin, Dr. Roland Marti, had visited a camp where amongst others, Russian PW were held, and that he had chanced to notice that these PW needed clothing and food parcels. M. Burckhardt added that the ICRC had studied ways and means for sending relief supplied to the Russian PW, and expressed his gratitude to the American Red Cross for having offered its co-operation in this field. He then took up the question of the costs which would be entailed if the ICRC were to employ a cargo ship for this purpose, and of the terms for purchase and shipment food-stuffs, which could be bought in the Belgian Congo.

On February 16, the ICRC was at last able to announce to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in Moscow that it was in possession of the requisite authorizations.

'Telegram 6374 Geneva, February 16, 1942.

Molotov People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Moscow,

The British Government authorize the purchase of foodstuffs in Africa for parcels for Russian prisoners of war in Germany and transportation by International Redcross ships. Would your Excellency kindly make us a proposal in this respect ? The necessary funds for these purchases could be sent us through the Bank for International Settlements in Basle.

This telegram was completed on February 27 by a wire to M. Molotov announcing, firstly, that the Canadian Red Cross had offered 500,000 vials of vitamins for Russian PW, and secondly, that the German authorities had agreed in principle to collective consignments for Russian PW. The Committee added that the British authorities asked for supervision of the issue of shipments by the Committee's delegates, and that this condition would doubtless be accepted by the adverse party, if the Soviet Government agreed to allow delegates of the ICRC to be sent to Russia.

All these offers and communications from the ICRC to the Soviet authorities remained unanswered, either directly or indirectly.

* * *

In view of this silence, the ICRC abandoned for the time being any general negotiations, by its own motion, with a view to establishing an agreement between Germany and Russia regarding the exchange of PW lists and of relief supplies.

Considering the formal decision made by Berlin not to forward any lists without reciprocity, and that none of the treaty stipulations relating to PW mail and relief supplies, like those relating to the communication of lists of sick and wounded, had been implemented by the two parties, the ICRC thought that there seemed little hope in the near future of a change of attitude, either on the part of Germany or of the USSR, which would make an agreement possible.

At first, the ICRC was disquieted by the fact that the Soviet authorities remained dumb, and suspected some misunderstanding. Information which subsequently reached Geneva

proved that the Committee was not alone to encounter absolute silence ; parallel negotiations undertaken by the Protecting Powers and by neutral or friendly Powers met with no better response. Adopting similar tactics in the matter of Soviet PW, the German authorities acted in the same way towards other intermediaries as towards the ICRC.

The Allies of Soviet Russia were directly concerned in the Committee's securing as wide an application as possible of the humanitarian principles defined by the international Conventions. Any discrimination between PW of various nationalities detained by Germany might indeed lead finally to a deterioration in the living conditions of those who were most favoured.

The appeals and steps of the ICRC were followed with great interest, in particular by the English-speaking countries. These facilitated the endeavours of the ICRC, and even offered them, of their own accord, their friendly and direct assistance, whilst undertaking parallel negotiations. But all attempts remained fruitless.

(b) Negotiations in Germany concerning relief for Russian PW.

In the spring of 1942, the ICRC received the assurance from the countries associated and allied with Soviet Russia, that donations were ready for Russian PW. The Committee then asked the OKW, in May 1942 if it would be possible to forward these parcels to the PW, and invited suggestions as to the co-operation of its delegates in their issue.

A communication from the Committee's delegation in Berlin (June 1, 1942) stated that the OKW objected to the shipment of foodstuffs to Russian PW. On the following day, however, a representative of the OKW stated to the Committee's delegate that the refusal was not final, and that consequently the answer to the Committee's application would be deferred.

It was only on September 2, 1942, that the OKW replied officially : the shipment of parcels to Russian PW was refused. According to a letter from the delegation in Berlin, however, the OKW seems to have agreed to such shipments, but on the following three conditions : (a) the OKW would themselves

name the camps to be benefited ; (b) the camp commanders would themselves arrange for issues and collect receipts ; (c) there would be no supervision and no camp visits by delegates of the ICRC in the case of Russian PW.

These conditions were contrary to those laid down by the blockade authorities and by the donors, and were unacceptable to them.

Since issue of foodstuffs to Russian PW in Germany proved impossible, the ICRC decided to send to Finland the donations in kind which were available. Finland had, of its own accord, asked for a supplement of foodstuffs for Russian PW, since its position made it temporarily impossible to supply this extra amount, and it agreed to the control conditions laid down ¹.

In a telegram sent by the ICRC on October 5, 1942, the Alliance was notified of this distribution, and was asked to inform the appropriate quarters in Moscow of the fact.

(c) *Relations between the ICRC and the Soviet Authorities in the summer and autumn of 1942.*

In July 1942, the transmission by the Alliance of a protest by German PW, and a Finnish request for exchange of information about PW, sick and wounded, furnished the ICRC with an opportunity of handing to the Alliance, through the Soviet Embassy in Ankara, and to the Soviet Government, by a letter addressed to M. Molotov, a memorandum summarizing their efforts in the Eastern conflict. No answer was received to this memorandum, nor to an approach made to the Soviet authorities in another field ; in a letter of October 5, 1942, the ICRC asked whether the Soviet Government would be ready to support a scheme for reuniting Polish families who had been dispersed by the war, this scheme being part of the work for the protection of civilian populations.

* * *

¹ The detail of this relief scheme in Finland will be found in Vol. III, Part I, chapter 4.

In October 1942, the end of what may be called the second phase is situated. The position was far from encouraging, if not the contrary. The ICRC had been compelled to interrupt its efforts to obtain an exchange of lists. The German refusal and the absence of any Soviet response now constrained it to give up its endeavours in the field of relief. The Committee had to relinquish all hope of seeing the two major belligerents in Eastern Europe come to any kind of agreement in this respect.

3. Protests and application for enquiries

On several occasions during the war in Eastern Europe, protests alleging violations of international law were lodged with the ICRC.

On January 19, 1940, the association known as the " *Lieux de Genève* " ¹ notified the Committee that they had received from Finland an application for an enquiry in respect of certain air bombardments. The Committee declined the proposal to participate in the enquiry. It referred in this connection to its memorandum of September 12, 1939, defining the conditions under which they could take part in enquiries. The chief condition was, it will be recalled, that the Committee should be approached by all parties concerned ².

Shortly afterwards, the ICRC received direct, by letter from the Finnish Red Cross, dated January 31, 1940, a protest against the air bombing of civilian populations, hospitals and sanatoriums. In accordance with the policy it had recently reaffirmed, and with established custom, the Committee confined itself to sending this protest to the Alliance. It notified the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in Moscow of this step, and, asked that the Alliance should be enabled to reply, giving the views of the Soviet Government on the subject. No answer was received to this request.

On August 27, 1941, the Rumanian Red Cross informed the Committee that wounded members of the Rumanian forces were

¹ See below, chapter on Hospital Zones.

² See above, pp. 173 sqq.

reported to have been mutilated by Russian soldiers. The ICRC likewise communicated this protest to the Alliance, with the request for an answer which would be sent to the Rumanian Red Cross. This further request did not elicit any reply.

On June 4, 1942, the ICRC received from the Alliance, through the Soviet Embassy in Ankara, a letter dated February 9, 1942, to which were annexed records of statements made in January 1942 by German PW detained in Camp 78, alleging breaches of the Geneva Convention of 1929, committed by the German army, and a memorandum from M. Molotov, previously published, on the crimes, atrocities and acts of violence committed in the occupied regions of the USSR. In their letter, the Alliance asked the ICRC to communicate their protest to the Red Cross Societies of all countries. It has been said¹ that the ICRC established as one of its rules never to bring before world opinion any findings other than those of their own delegates. The Committee replied on July 9 to that effect but in view of the formal character of the application received, the ICRC stated that they would send the documents concerned to the German Red Cross, asking it to submit them to the German Government.

The German Red Cross replied in a letter dated September 30, 1942, that on the German side there was no intention of entering into any discussion about these statements, which had already been known for a long time through broadcast messages and tracts dropped by aircraft.

In June 1942 (the date remained in blank on the original), the President of the Executive Committee of the Alliance, M. Kolesnikof, communicated a further protest from German PW interned in Camp 74, dated the month of May. It was received at the end of August in Geneva and communicated to the German Red Cross.

The Katyn Forest Affair. — It will be recalled that in April 1943, the German authorities stated in the press that they had found in common graves, in the Forest of Katyn, near

¹ See above, p. 173 sqq.

Smolensk, in territory which was occupied at the time by the German forces, the bodies of thousands of missing Polish officers.

On April 15, 1943, the ICRC received from the German Red Cross a request to take part in the operations of disinternment ; all facilities were offered for the immediate departure of an ICRC delegation. In a second application, the German Red Cross asked the assistance of the Committee in identifying bodies which, they stated, were the bodies of Polish officers reported missing in the USSR and " who were stated to have been murdered by the Bolsheviks ".

On April 17, the Polish Government in London also asked that representatives of the ICRC " should be allowed to examine on the spot the situation described by the German communiqués ".

On account of the publicity this case received throughout the world, the ICRC made known their answer in a press communiqué, on April 23, as follows :

The German Red Cross and the Polish Government in London have applied to the ICRC, asking it to participate in the identification of the bodies which have been discovered, according to German reports, in the vicinity of Smolensk. The ICRC have replied in both cases that, in principle, it would be ready to lend assistance in appointing neutral experts, on condition that all the parties concerned ask them to do so, in conformity with the memorandum sent by the ICRC on September 12, 1939 to the belligerent States, and in which the Committee established, at the outbreak of war, the principles according to which it could ultimately take part in such investigations.

Shortly after, on May 4, the Polish Government withdrew their application. The German Government never confirmed the requests made by the German Red Cross. As for the Soviet Government, it never sent any request to the Committee on the subject. For these reasons, the conditions laid down by the Committee were not met. The Committee therefore took no part, even indirectly, in the investigation on the case known as the Katyn Forest Affair.

4. Third Phase: From autumn 1942 to the end of hostilities

(a) *Actual beginning of mail from PW in Russia.*

At the beginning of this period, in November 1942, the battle for Stalingrad was raging. The fighting was so desperate that any concession by one of the antagonists seemed out of the question. Yet it was at this time that the Russian authorities allowed numbers of Axis PW to send post-cards to their next of kin. These cards were supplied by the Alliance and forwarded through the Turkish post office.

The ICRC were deeply interested by this practical result, which corresponded to their hopes, and considered it as the prelude of a new phase in the entire problem—the more so as official Rumanian circles and certain unofficial circles in Germany attached great importance to this beginning of a mail service. The time seemed at hand to endeavour once more to come to some formal agreement, or to reach a *modus vivendi* which would give general effect to this first and partial success.

Early in 1943, the ICRC therefore sent to Ankara another mission, which was instructed to sound the Soviet representative as to Russia's new attitude. Information was required on the following points: (a)—whether the Soviet post offices would forward, within the borders of Russia, any replies which might come from the next of kin to the PW cards; (b)—whether the Soviet Information Bureau could supply the addresses of the PW whose names had been broadcast by the Soviet stations, or forward the mail addressed to it, when the address of the camp was unknown; (c)—Whether the Bureau was in a position to answer the enquiries from the Geneva Agency about PW. These enquiries concerned almost entirely PW from Axis countries.

During his conversations at the Soviet Embassy, the Committee's delegate was careful to stress that Geneva would be glad to present similar demands to the German authorities on the USSR. The ICRC hoped that the Soviet attitude would enable it, by the interplay of reciprocity, to secure similar

measures by Germany and her allies, some of whom, such as Rumania and Finland, had for a long time past shown themselves favourably disposed.

The Committee's delegate did not merely make enquiries. He handed to the Soviet Embassy the first correspondence forms sent from Rumania by Russian PW, and messages from Russian civilians in occupied territory to their next of kin in the USSR. He took this occasion to explain to the Soviet representative the working of the Committee's Civilian Message Scheme, which was adopted at the time by practically all the countries at war.

Finally, he renewed in his talks the wish of the Committee that this correspondence should be extended in both directions and pointed out the efforts made by the Committee to work out a scheme for supplying Russian PW with food.

The Soviet Embassy undertook to send a report to Moscow on all these matters ; but here again, the ICRC never received any reply.

During this time, the delegates of the ICRC in Germany took every useful opportunity to ask for improvements in the treatment of Russian PW, without however ever receiving favourable answers. The Rumanian Government authorized the ICRC to send to Moscow all the lists of Russian PW in Rumania, on condition of an exchange of equivalent particulars. They moreover invited the ICRC to send one of their members to establish contact with the Rumanian Red Cross and to visit PW camps.

(b) Further contacts with the Soviet Authorities.

Whereas it was possible to maintain or reinforce direct relations between the ICRC and most of the belligerent Powers, the necessary contact with Soviet Russia was always indirect and too intermittent. To remedy this state of affairs, the Committee decided to instruct its former delegate in Moscow during the period 1920-1937, to act as permanent liaison with the Soviet Embassies which were within reach of Geneva and close to the USSR, namely those at Ankara and Teheran. The delegate was given two letters, one addressed to the People's

Commissar for Foreign Affairs, the other to the Alliance, which he handed to the Soviet Embassy upon his arrival at Ankara in May 1943. In the first of these, the ICRC recalled in substance its offer of services, which led to no practical result, at the outbreak of hostilities. It pointed out that a mandate received from the International Red Cross Conferences laid upon it the imperative duty of maintaining with National Societies every useful contact, to enable it to carry out relief work in behalf of war victims, especially of the wounded and sick, PW and civilian internees. This co-operation had been hampered, owing to circumstances and difficulties of a practical nature. The ICRC was now instructing a special delegate to keep the Soviet authorities informed, and to conduct the negotiations required for a solution. In the letter to the Alliance, the ICRC expressed its wish to set up a scheme for sending information about PW, as had been suggested at the outbreak of the war in Eastern Europe, and according to the telegrams exchanged at that time between the ICRC and the Soviet Government. The Committee recalled that during the first World War, the ICRC were able to make enquiries in Russia in regard to combatants who were taken prisoner, or had fallen on the battle-field.

Simultaneously, on April 19, 1943, a telegram was sent to M. Molotov. Recalling the affirmative answer which he had given on June 27, 1941, to the concrete proposals of the ICRC, and the acceptance of the enemy Governments, the telegram expressed the hope that it would be possible to arrange for the exchange of lists and similar information. It stated further that 54,000 names of Russian PW in Rumania were available at the delegation's offices in Ankara, on condition of reciprocity, to the offer of the Rumanian Government.

In Teheran, the delegate of the ICRC once more explained the view of the ICRC, both in writing and verbally, to the Soviet Embassy in that city¹. A few days later and at the

¹ He proposed in writing to that Embassy, to inform the appropriate authorities in Moscow as to the various war activities of the ICRC, to learn the wishes of the U.S.S.R., to which the ICRC might be in a position to respond, and to gather information concerning the work of the Alliance about which Geneva possessed only few details.

suggestion of the Embassy, he asked for a visa for Moscow. He added that on his arrival, he could supply fuller particulars to the authorities concerned on the services which the ICRC could render to certain classes of war victims on both sides of the front. This welfare work would be carried out either along the lines of the Hague Convention, or of the most liberal humanitarian principles, and subject to complete reciprocity, as was the work carried out elsewhere by the Committee. The delegate also expressed the hope that by going to Moscow, misunderstandings that might exist between the Soviet authorities and the ICRC might be cleared up. In order to hasten the establishing of closer relations, the delegate suggested to the Alliance on August 14, 1943 that they should send one of their representatives to Teheran to discuss the above matters.

Meanwhile, the exchange of news continued between PW in Russia and their next of kin, and between Russian civilians and combatants in Rumania and their next of kin in the USSR. It was difficult to ascertain the volume of this correspondence ; the ICRC transmitted only a small part of it ; all the remainder went by the regular channels, i.e. the postal services of the neutral countries. In October 1943, however, the hope was dashed that sufficient reciprocity was established to allow a general exchange of mail, which would be extended to the masses of Russian PW in Germany as a whole. The delegation of the Committee in Berlin was informed unofficially—and with considerable delay—that the Russian PW in Germany were still not allowed to write to their next of kin in the USSR. The reason for maintaining this prohibition was, apparently, that the despatch of cards by a certain number of German prisoners in Russia did not furnish conclusive proof of a formal and general authorization granted to all German PW.

Shortly before receiving the telegram from Geneva informing him of this refusal by the Germans, the Committee's delegate in Teheran twice repeated his former requests to the Soviet Embassy. On October 31, he also recalled the wish of the ICRC that the Alliance should appoint, or delegate to him, a representative who would keep him informed of the activities of the Alliance, and contribute by personal contact to strengthen tradi-

tional and friendly relations. He likewise handed to the Soviet Embassy a report drawn up by M. Chapuisat, a member of the ICRC who, accompanied by M. de Traz, had been authorized to visit the Russian PW in Rumanian hands. The report gave an account of the inspection of camps situated in the territories which were occupied at the time by the Rumanians.

The delegate of the ICRC at last had the satisfaction, in December 1943, of meeting in Teheran a delegate of the Alliance. He was told, however, by this qualified representative that the Alliance was wholly absorbed by its task at home and had temporarily abandoned all foreign activities; the question of enquiries about PW was outside the competency of the Alliance and concerned, first and foremost, the Supreme Army Command. As for the shipment of relief parcels to PW, a satisfactory solution could doubtless be envisaged.

The delegate of the Committee spoke in defence of the Committee's views; moreover, in a letter of December 8, 1943, he described the relief schemes for Russian PW, which had been undertaken in Finland under the sponsorship of the ICRC. He commented on the reports on visits to Russian PW camps in Finland and Rumania, and on the work undertaken in Switzerland in behalf of Russian escaped PW in that country¹.

Following on these negotiations, the Soviet Embassy in Teheran informed the delegate of the Committee that the whole question of the relations between the ICRC and the USSR was being examined in Moscow.

At the end of January 1944, the ICRC instructed its delegate in Teheran to express once more the interest which attached to the establishment of direct contacts with the Alliance in a town chosen by it, and to the visit of a representative of the Alliance to Geneva. Likewise, if Moscow expressed the wish, the ICRC would be glad to send to the USSR a mission charged with

¹ A certain number of Russian PW and civilians who were in Germany succeeded, between 1942 and 1945, in escaping and taking refuge in Switzerland. This country was surrounded at the time on all sides by the Axis forces, and these escapees, like those from other Allied countries, could not return to their country of origin. They were therefore assembled temporarily in internment camps in Switzerland.

the work of preparing the establishing of another permanent delegation to the Soviet Government and the Alliance. Four months later, on May 9, 1944, these same proposals were submitted direct from Geneva by telegram to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and to the Alliance.

Although no general solution of matters of principle was reached, some partial results were achieved. The Alliance agreed, through their representative in Teheran, to answer enquiries in Soviet-controlled territories concerning members of the Red Army and civilians who had moved from their homes as a result of the war. The ICRC was then receiving from neutral, and even Allied, Red Cross Societies enquiries of this kind, as these Societies apparently received no answer to their direct enquiries and thus applied to the ICRC, whom they thought to be in a more favoured position than themselves.

Meanwhile, on March 10, 1944, the delegate of the ICRC in Teheran informed the Soviet Embassy that, at the earnest request of the Committee's delegates in Berlin, the German authorities had at last agreed to a certain freedom of correspondence for the Russian civilian detainees in Germany and in the occupied territories, but on condition that the ICRC should guarantee reciprocity on this point. The matter remained in abeyance.

At last, however, a reply to all the steps taken by the ICRC arrived. It was not what was expected. On August 9, 1944, the representative of the Alliance in Teheran and the Soviet Embassy verbally informed the delegate of the ICRC that, for the time being, the Alliance was not authorized by the Soviet Government to enter into official and direct relations with the ICRC, and that it was therefore not in a position to answer the proposals made by the Committee. It was added that this decision should not prevent the continuation of the *de facto* relations, as they existed at the time, nor the study of current problems in semi-official interviews.

This decision placed a check on the unceasing endeavours of the ICRC in behalf of the Russian PW in the hands of Germany and her allies, and of Axis prisoners in the hands of the USSR.

The ICRC therefore undertook no more general steps. But it kept up occasional contacts with the Soviet authorities and the Alliance. On the other side of the front, the Russian PW camps in Germany remained strictly closed to the ICRC, although it had constant relations with the German authorities.

It was only in the very last stages of the war, when the camps were forced to open in Germany, because the PW had to be removed from the front, that the "white trucks" of the ICRC, conveying food supplies to the PW along the high roads, had occasion to help columns of Russian PW whom they met on the march. The ICRC asked the Western Allies for permission to give these men also the benefit of the stocks which had been built up in Germany for their own nationals. The emergency was so great that the Committee did not even wait for an answer to act. The reply reached Geneva quickly, and was of course in the affirmative.

Meanwhile, the Soviet armies advanced their front through the countries who were allies of Germany or occupied by her; they took Vienna and Berlin. Everywhere, as is usual, the Committee's delegations remained at their posts and pursued their humanitarian duties.

Most of these delegations were tolerated by the Soviet military authorities, and were able, at least partially, to meet the tasks which confronted them. On the other hand, the delegates who had remained in Berlin were suddenly deprived of the means of carrying on their work. They were finally taken to Soviet Russia in June 1945, and interned for several months, without even knowing the grounds for this measure, before being repatriated to Switzerland.

After this, the relations between the delegations of the ICRC and the Soviet occupation authorities became normal. A new delegation was even able to settle in Berlin and co-operate extensively with these authorities, bringing relief to the civilian population in the capital and in the Soviet zone.

XII. The Far Eastern Conflict¹

(A). INTRODUCTION

During the first World War, the number of prisoners in the hands of the Japanese forces was very small, and the ICRC was not really called on to take action in the Far East. At that time nothing had revealed the very considerable differences which existed between Japanese conceptions and Western ideas on the subject of prisoners of war. At the time of the last War the position was different.

During nearly four years, up to the capitulation of Japan in August 1945, the activities of the ICRC met with the most serious difficulties in all areas under Japanese domination. These difficulties were doubtless due chiefly to the survival of certain ancestral ideas, according to which the status of prisoner of war is degrading.

Having emerged from its thousand year old isolation less than a century ago, the Empire of the Rising Sun soon entered the group of the Great Powers. Like these, it had adhered to the humanitarian laws embodied in the Geneva and Hague Conventions. It had more particularly signed the two Geneva Conventions of July 27, 1929, the first for the relief of wounded and sick in armies in the field, and the other concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. But of these two Conventions it had ratified the first, but not the second. So far as treatment

¹ It should be noted that the present chapter deals, by way of exception, with the matter of Relief Supplies, as far as the Far Eastern conflict is concerned. In this theatre, questions of relief and of protection were closely related, and they were both handled by one particular Department of the ICRC.

of prisoners of war was concerned, one can gauge how much tradition remained alive, not only in the military clans called on to govern the destinies of the Empire, but also in the Japanese people as a whole.

Indeed, even in the West, the idea that PW should be protected against arbitrary action by the conqueror, is relatively recent in the history of law ; as late as the XVIIth century, Grotius seemed to admit that persons captured during war became slaves under international law, as did their posterity.

In Japan, in 1854, if we may believe a contemporary English diplomatist, during the civil war which opened the country to modern industrial methods, the military parties fighting each other executed all captured adversaries out of hand¹. In fact, the Japanese were of opinion that any soldier captured was dishonoured and thus deserved capital punishment. In 1882, in spite of far-reaching changes carried out in other spheres, under the influence of Western ideas, the Regulations of the Imperial Army upheld the principle that military honour forbade a Japanese soldier to surrender to the enemy. The military regulations promulgated by the Minister of War on January 8, 1942, at the beginning of the Far Eastern conflict, maintained these traditional ideas in all their strictness. The chapters of these regulations concerning the life, death and honour of a Japanese soldier state that every man must die if he cannot carry out the task assigned to him, in order that his country may have victory. To be taken prisoner is a disgrace.

The customs observed in Japan during the second World War show how deeply public opinion was still governed by these ideas. When a soldier left his family to join a combatant unit, his departure often led to a ceremony to which his friends were invited. This ceremony was carried out in accordance with funeral rites. A lock of hair and a piece of nail of the soldier were kept by his relatives. From that moment, the man was dead, so far as his family was concerned, and was regarded by them as having returned to his ancestors. He could only come back alive as a conqueror. In the meantime, his relations

¹ Cf. Sir Ernest SATOW : "A Diplomat in Japan", pp. 327 sqq.

experienced no wish to receive news of him. Should his letters not be held up by the military authorities, he was advised not to write. The news of his capture by the enemy involved dishonour for his family. This conception was still so firmly fixed in the Japanese mind that certain prisoners whose capture had, in accordance with the Convention, been notified to the Central PW Agency, insisted that their names should not be forwarded to Tokyo. In other cases, Japanese soldiers concealed their identity out of respect for their families. A delegate of the ICRC noted, even after the close of hostilities, that Japanese PW who were being repatriated, were determined never to see their families again, and to accept employment anywhere under assumed names "to avoid dishonour". To understand the state of mind which then dominated Japan, we need only remember the praise that the military communiqués showered upon garrisons or civil populations who refused to surrender and committed suicide or were killed to the last man.

Although the Japanese kept the initiative in operations for a long time, and thus suffered fewer losses than the enemy, the figure of prisoners captured on both sides is nevertheless striking. In October 1944, the number of Japanese PW in the hands of the Allied forces was 6,400, whereas that of Allied PW in the hands of the Japanese at the same time could be estimated at 103,000 (without counting those who died in the camps or were drowned through ships being torpedoed).

In these circumstances, the situation of Allied PW was bound to be critical. Since the Japanese Authorities took only very little interest in their own prisoners, they exercised severity where enemy PW were concerned. Though a few Japanese in high position were anxious to implement the Convention, their attempts were obstructed by the military authorities, who denied the value of humanitarian principles. These principles were the more difficult to defend, since the argument of reciprocity could hardly be adduced.

Furthermore, discipline in the Japanese Army was always very strict. Disciplinary punishments were so severe as to be incomprehensible to the Western mind. The same discipline

was unfortunately enforced on Allied troops in Japanese camps. The PW was not only regarded as a deeply detested enemy, but also as a man who had "lost face" by ceasing to fight. Furthermore, so far as food was concerned, the Japanese soldier's rations are far smaller than those issued to the Allied forces. As for living conditions in Japan, there is no need to emphasize the contrast between them and the standard to which inhabitants of countries of Western civilization are accustomed.

The Japanese treatment of civilians was not comparable to that to which the PW were subjected. The Japanese Government always displayed concern for its nationals who were domiciled in enemy territory at the moment of the attack on Pearl Harbour. According to the Japanese conception, these persons were not dishonoured by the fact that they had been interned by Powers at war with Japan. Also, the fact of their great number gave some weight to arguments based on reciprocity.

Thus, by reason of the difficulties which had been encountered up to August 1945, the ICRC had to make very strenuous efforts, even to secure results which were in no way proportionate to these exertions.

From the moment of the capitulation, however, the Japanese authorities ceased to obstruct the Committee's endeavours. During the weeks which preceded the arrival of the Allied troops, the representatives of the ICRC were able to carry out the essential task of bringing relief to Allied service men and civilians held in prisoner of war or internee camps. This action saved from starvation and sickness a large number of persons whom the victorious forces were not yet able to help, since they were far away and capitulation had been very sudden. The release of these detainees, who numbered about 200,000, did not, as a matter of fact, require much time.

Then arose the question of the millions of members of the Japanese Army and Navy, handed over by the capitulation to the Allied forces. The situation was now reversed, and the absence of reciprocity worked against the Japanese. The numbers of the personnel who thus fell into the hands of the Allies in the space of a few days created a problem which could

only be solved by allocating the Japanese troops fixed quarters, and leaving them under the command of their staff officers. The Japanese officers became responsible for the carrying out of orders given by the Allied military authorities. In these circumstances, the Allied Governments thought it impossible to apply to Japanese soldiers all the provisions of the 1929 Convention, and decided to classify the personnel of the Japanese Army and Navy under a distinct category of detainees, called "Surrendered Enemy Personnel" (SEP). Obviously, the ICRC could not be indifferent to their fate. It took steps with regard to them and approached the Allied Authorities, as it did during hostilities, when it appealed to the Japanese authorities in favour of the Allied PW. It even obtained from the Allied States signatories to the Convention, facilities which its delegates had been refused by the Japanese authorities during the war. These representatives were allowed, on application, to visit Japanese military camps, to talk freely with the Japanese, and to organize correspondence and relief work. The situation of these men was the same as that of the Germans after the capitulation of the Reich; the Germans also were regarded by the Allies as "Surrendered Enemy Personnel"; the steps taken by the ICRC in respect of both are set forth in the chapter concerning PW whose rights under the Convention were in dispute.

The ICRC was also called upon to act in the conflicts of which Indonesia and Indochina were the theatres during the post-war period. These matters are dealt with below, in their proper place.

We shall here consider especially the steps taken by the ICRC in favour of Allied nationals during the Far Eastern war. This study has two parts.

The first concerns the general activities of the ICRC, and deals with the endeavours made to secure the application of the Convention in the Far East, the appointment of delegates of the ICRC, their relations with the Japanese authorities, visits of camps living conditions, correspondence and issue of relief supplies.

The second part summarizes the work of the delegates and representatives of the ICRC, by districts, and mentions the relief issued both to Allied and Japanese PW and internees.

(B). ACTIVITIES OF THE ICRC DURING THE FAR EASTERN
CONFLICT

I. General conditions

As soon as hostilities began between Japan, on the one side, and the United States and Great Britain on the other, the ICRC invited the three Governments concerned to forward all information concerning PW by cable to the Central PW Agency at Geneva. Although Japan was not bound by the 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, no obstacle should be raised to the forwarding of such information, "in so far as the Governments of the belligerent States reciprocally allow such communication or declare themselves willing to apply *de facto* the provisions of the 1929 Convention".

On December 24, 1941, the ICRC notified Tokyo of the favourable reply received from the U.S. Government and of the appointment of a representative in Washington; the Committee further proposed that its Tokyo correspondent should be recognised as representative for Japan.

The reply of the Japanese Government, received in January 1942, agreed to communicate to the Central Agency information concerning PW and non-combatants detained by the Japanese authorities; it also notified the opening in Tokyo of an information office for PW (*Huryojohokyoku*).

Some days later the Committee's representative was approved by the Japanese Authorities.

The ICRC had, however, received no definite reply from the Japanese Government as to the policy the latter wished to follow with regard to the Convention itself. The Committee therefore applied once more to Tokyo, in February 1942, and further made it clear that, in its opinion, the fact that Japan was not a party to the Convention in no way prevented the *de facto* application of the provisions of this Convention to civilian internees, subject of course to reciprocity. In Tokyo, too, the Committee's representative made constant attempts to obtain from the Japanese Government a definite reply as to

the manner in which the latter intended to treat PW and civilian internees. The Japanese Government made its position on the question known through the Japanese Legation at Berne in the following terms :

Since the Japanese Government has not ratified the Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, signed at Geneva on July 27, 1929, it is therefore not bound by the said Convention. Nevertheless, in so far as possible, it intends to apply this Convention *mutatis mutandis*, to all prisoners of war who may fall into its hands, at the same time taking into consideration the customs of each nation and each race in respect of feeding and clothing of prisoners.

The Legation's note added that the Japanese Government had already, through the countries protecting the interests of these States in Japan, notified the above to the United States of America, Great Britain, India, South Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The ICRC called Tokyo's attention to the fact that the list of States to which the Japanese declaration had been notified did not include the Netherlands. The Japanese Government thereupon replied that it would also apply the 1929 Convention to the nationals of that country.

As for the application of the Convention to civilian internees, the Japanese Legation at Berne stated on February 14, 1942 :

During the whole of the present war the Japanese Government will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, and subject to reciprocity, the articles of the Convention concerning prisoners of war to non-combatant internees of enemy countries, on condition that the belligerent States do not subject them against their will to manual labour.

The Legation asked the ICRC to communicate this reply to the Governments of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and the Netherlands Indies, the same text having been communicated to the United States of America through the Swiss Government.

These results gave reason to hope that the work of the ICRC could be carried out under conditions similar to those which prevailed in the other theatres of military operations. This

hope was belied, by reason of the Japanese character and the conditions under which hostilities in the Far East were prosecuted.

Mistrust reached such a pitch that all foreigners who were not nationals of a Power allied to Japan were suspected of espionage. Indeed, the Committee's delegation itself seemed to be barely tolerated. The civil and military police went so far as to regard the delegation as a centre instructed to obtain information for, or on behalf of the representatives of the Protecting Power, whose duty was—so the Japanese authorities thought—to establish liaison with Japan's enemies. To combat these suspicions, the Committee's delegation at Tokyo denied itself the same close relations with the representatives of the Protecting Powers as in the other belligerent countries, where no such difficulties existed. By fostering this suspicion, the military clans systematically hampered the action of the Committee's representatives.

The circumstances in which one of these agents (not officially recognised it is true), was condemned and executed, show what dangers were incurred in the Far East by men who tried to serve the humanitarian work of the Red Cross in that part of the world. Dr. Matthaeus Vischer had been chosen by the Committee to act as delegate in Borneo before the island was occupied by the Japanese forces. When that occupation took place, in March 1942, the head of the Tokyo delegation was instructed to have Dr Vischer accredited to the authorities and to the Japanese Red Cross. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, and the Japanese Legation at Berne were notified of Dr Vischer's presence in Borneo. When renewing its demand that this delegate should be officially recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Committee stated that Dr Vischer's duties in the future would be the same as in the past, namely "to care for all the victims of the war in accordance with the tradition of absolute neutrality of the ICRC".

In spite of frequent applications, the ICRC received no reply before the Japanese defeat. An official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs then verbally expressed, on August 18, 1945,

the agreement of the Japanese government to Dr Vischer's appointment. A few days previously, the ICRC had been informed by the Swiss Legation in Japan that Dr Vischer and his wife had been arrested on May 13, 1943, on a charge of conspiracy against the Japanese Government, and that they had been sentenced and executed in December of the same year. Among the charges brought forward by the Japanese naval court-martial against these unfortunate people was that of having "criminally" sought to learn not only the number of PW and civilian internees in Borneo, but also their names, age, race, status, conditions of life and health, and of attempting to send them food. It is true that, in answer to a strong protest, the ICRC did receive apologies both from the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the Japanese Red Cross ; the former explained that the ship which carried the records of the 1943 affair had been torpedoed and sunk with all on board. But at no moment during the war, could this Department or this Red Cross Society give the ICRC assistance even distantly comparable to that which it enjoyed in the other belligerent countries.

2. Relations with the Authorities and with the Japanese Red Cross

The Japanese Red Cross, which was highly esteemed in Japan, was mainly intended to provide for the upkeep of Red Cross hospitals and the training of nurses.

In spite of the best intentions, the "Foreign Section" of this national Society was regarded by the military authorities only as a subordinate department. It was unable to carry out the rapidly increasing duties which were connected with the war. The burden of the work fell on a Director and a Secretary, assisted by three voluntary workers, who were unfortunately not well acquainted with foreign languages. Custom demanded that a representative of the Society should accompany the Committee's delegates in their camp visits, but the Secretary, who was the only person available, was soon exhausted by this arduous task. In view of staff shortage, the Society had renewed difficulties in co-operating usefully with the Committee's delegation in Tokyo.

The relations of this delegation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Gaimusho*) were cordial, but on the whole of slight importance. In practice, this department generally played for time and put off any decision in matters concerning the Committee's delegation. They often referred delegates back to the Japanese Red Cross, alleging that the ICRC would have thereby a means of making contact with the Japanese authorities. The minor part allotted to that Society in Japan during the war is well known. The dilatory attitude of the *Gaimusho* was also shown by the delay in its replies to notes from the delegation. Thus, in six months seventeen notes were sent to the Ministry and four replies only were received.

The PW Information Bureau (*Huryojohokyoku*), which was a government service subordinate to the Ministry of War, was very unwilling to co-operate with the delegation. In practice, relations with this Bureau were confined to an exchange of notes, replies arriving even more slowly than from the Foreign Office. Personal visits were discountenanced; the delegation was even asked to deal with all questions only by correspondence. A note from the delegation dated April 25, 1945, emphasized the fact that there was "a singular lack of information" concerning the PW and civilian internees in Rabaul (New Britain). The directors of the Bureau took serious umbrage at this, and threatened to stop sending to Geneva any news concerning the health or death of PW, unless they at once received apologies. The staff of the PW Information Bureau were all retired officers, who distrusted foreigners.

Relations with this Bureau were so difficult that it was only at the close of hostilities that the delegation was able to know exactly how it was organized. The Bureau comprised two offices: (1) the office for information concerning PW and (2) the office for the administration of PW; both were under the same chief. Whereas the Information Bureau issued the least possible amount of data concerning PW, nothing was ever said about the administration of the camps. The lists of deceased PW, particularly of airmen, were incomplete. Further, the information asked for by the Central PW Agency seems never to have led to enquiries in the camps; replies were merely

given on the strength of information contained in the central card-index in Tokyo.

Relations with the officials of the Ministry of the Interior (*Naimusho*), which was responsible for civilian internee camps, were also by no means easy. The police officials often hardly dissembled the contempt they felt for the Red Cross delegates, despite the fact that Japan has a reputation for habitual courtesy. At a certain time, the delegates were entirely unable to travel, as the *Naimusho* refused to grant them the necessary permits.

3. Appointment of new Delegates

The first delegate of the ICRC was, as has been said, approved by the Japanese authorities in January 1942.

Very soon he discovered how arduous his duties would be, and asked Geneva to give him an assistant. The ICRC first planned to send him a highly experienced assistant delegate, chosen among its Geneva staff; in view of the attitude of the Japanese towards all foreigners, and to save time, the Committee decided to take the advice of their Tokyo delegate and choose a Swiss resident in Japan. At the same time, attempts were made to obtain the consent of the Japanese authorities to the appointment of delegates to foreign territories under Japanese authority.

Before the Japanese occupation the ICRC had already appointed delegates in these territories, at Singapore and in Java, Sumatra and Borneo, by agreement with the local authorities. From the very first days of the occupation, the Committee tried to obtain acceptance by the Japanese government of these delegates, who had been concerned with the relief of nationals of the Axis Powers, and would henceforth have to turn their attention to nationals of the Allied Powers, both PW and civilian internees. Furthermore, the Committee asked for official recognition of delegates at Shanghai, at Hongkong, in Siam and in the Philippines.

The Japanese Government agreed to the appointment of delegates in occupied territories which were no longer regarded

as zones of military operations. Thus an ICRC delegation was set up at Shanghai in March 1942, and at Hongkong in June 1942.

The ICRC did not, however, relax efforts to obtain the consent of the Japanese authorities to the appointment of delegates at Singapore, at Manila, in the Dutch East Indies and in Siam. The delegate at Singapore was accepted only at the time of the Japanese capitulation in 1945 ; nevertheless, during the occupation, he was able to do a certain amount of work in a more or less private capacity. As regards Manila, the Japanese Government invariably replied that "the time had not yet come" to make this official appointment. The agent wrote himself :

Throughout the entire occupation I was never recognised by the local Japanese authorities, and whatever I was allowed to do had by all appearances to be of a private nature in my name.

In the Dutch East Indies, the negotiations undertaken with the Japanese Government proved fruitless, the latter confining itself to the reply that "the question could not be considered at present". The position of the Committee's representatives in the Dutch East Indies was the more difficult since, to all practical purposes, they were unable, throughout the war, to get into touch either with the headquarters of the ICRC at Geneva, or with the Tokyo delegation.

In Siam, the attempts of the ICRC to get their delegates accredited were partially successful. The Siamese authorities did indeed agree to the appointment of a delegate at Bangkok, but the Japanese refused to approve him, and that considerably hampered his work.

The situation remained unchanged up to the capitulation of Japan (except for the Philippine Islands, which were liberated before). In June 1943, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically refused the repeated applications of the ICRC : "As we have already explained time and again through your delegate in Japan, in view of the special circumstances prevailing in the southern occupied territories, the time has not yet come for compliance."

As soon as Japan came into the war, the ICRC tried to send some of its assistants to the Far East. The Japanese Government replied to every application from the ICRC that "the time was not yet come to contemplate the carrying out in practice of this scheme". On February 11, 1943, the ICRC insisted in the following terms :

Since the month of September 1939, the ICRC has sent to various countries special missions of a temporary character, in order to visit the national authorities and to make contact with the delegates whom they have appointed on the spot without being able to get in to personal touch with them. We do not think that there is any need to stress the value of such journeys, which are calculated to solve problems which concern Governments and the ICRC equally.

Japan has now been more than a year engaged in the present war, and the question we have to discuss with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Red Cross have become more and more numerous and complicated. At the same time, the duties entrusted to our delegate in Tokyo have been considerably extended. We are therefore certain that your Government will welcome the scheme that we have prepared.

The reply of the Japanese Government was that "the purpose of this mission would be better served if the departure were postponed to a later and more suitable date". In May 1943, the ICRC proposed the sending of a mission which could have travelled on one of the ships repatriating Japanese diplomatists.

The object of the mission would thus be more clearly defined, with the aim of making contact with the Imperial Authorities and the Japanese Red Cross. At the same time, the special mission would give the ICRC delegation in Tokyo all information necessary to enable it to carry out its duties in the manner regarded as the most effective by all concerned.

This proposal was renewed in the month of September. In November, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs cabled to the ICRC that "the material situation has not changed since our last communication" and that the despatch of a mission should be postponed to a more favourable date.

The Committee's delegate in Tokyo, a medical practitioner of Swiss nationality domiciled in Japan, was fully acquainted with the customs of the country, and had already represented the ICRC in Japan during the first World War. He died at his

post in January 1944, and this loss was the more unfortunate for the ICRC, since it seemed impossible to bring the Japanese Government to consent that a mission should be sent from Geneva. This event furnished the ICRC with a reason for an urgent renewal of its previous applications. The Committee had just been informed by the Japanese Legation at Berne of the "emotion of the Japanese authorities", in view of certain statements in the American and British press concerning "atrocities" committed by Japanese troops on the persons of Allied PW. Geneva took this opportunity to reply that any intervention by the ICRC to establish the facts would carry very much more weight, if the Japanese Government found it possible to accept the request which it had been the duty of the ICRC to submit, that a special mission be sent. Furthermore, the ICRC attempted to influence the decision of the Japanese by the communication, in February 1944, of a reply received from Washington, stating that "all the United States Government services concerned were, for their part, prepared to receive at any time a special mission to the United States, and to give them all facilities for carrying out their task". This, however, did not change the attitude of Tokyo.

Finally, in the autumn of 1944, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the first time gave a favourable reply. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of the ICRC, the departure of the mission was delayed. The practical preparation of the journey (planning of the route, issue of travel permits, difficulties of transport in countries at war, etc.) lasted several months and it was only in June 1945 that the new head of the delegation, accompanied by a woman assistant, who was thoroughly familiar with the work of the Central PW Agency, was able to leave Switzerland for Tokyo, where they arrived on August 11, at a moment when the second atomic bomb had just fallen on Nagasaki.

4. Visits to Camps

The difficulties encountered by the ICRC in accrediting its delegates to the Japanese authorities inevitably made problems for them in carrying out their duties. The suspicion with which

they were regarded, and the ill-will of the Japanese authorities responsible for the administration of prisoners of war, meant that they were only able, for instance, to visit 42 camps out of the 102 known to exist in Japan, Formosa, Korea and Manchuria, at the time of the capitulation.

Furthermore, these visits, during which they had to avoid quoting humanitarian conventions (mere mention of these texts annoyed Japanese military authorities) did not produce all the results that might have been expected from them. In Japan itself, the delegates found 34,000 Allied prisoners of war after the surrender of the Japanese forces, whereas only 27,000 names were known at Geneva. Also, more than anywhere else, many practical obstacles were put in the way of visits to camps. Permits, which had to be renewed in the case of each visit, were particularly difficult to obtain. The delegates, again, did not always receive the necessary travel permits. Lastly, when they went to fortified zones in which prison camps were situated, they had to supply photographs and make up an individual file for each application. Often the delegates did not know till the last moment whether the permit granted was a general one, or limited strictly to a single delegate. The duration of the visit of the camps was generally restricted to two hours, made up of one for conversation with the camp commandant, thirty minutes for visiting quarters, and thirty minutes for an interview, in the presence of the Japanese officers of the camp, with a camp leader appointed by them. No communication with the other prisoners was authorized, and negotiations undertaken with the object of altering this state of things were not successful. The camp commandants frequently refused to reply to questions put to them, on the score that they had not received authority to give information.

Visits to civilian internment camps were not so difficult. Nevertheless, after the autumn of 1944, the task of the delegates in this field was much complicated by the Japanese police authorities. No communication with the camp leaders or with the internees could take place, unless it was in the presence of representatives of the Detaining Power. The authorities found all kinds of reasons to delay or put off visits of delegates. The

representatives of the ICRC noted that almost always their visits to the camps occurred several days before or after the visits of the representatives of the Protecting Power.

At the end of 1944, the Japanese Government, in reply to many requests from the ICRC, at last did allow certain camps to be visited, on condition that these visits should not interfere with military operations, that persons carrying them out should be chosen on the spot and should act as temporary representatives of the Tokyo delegation. Reciprocity, too, was to be guaranteed by the Allied Governments, particularly in New Caledonia and in the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Guam. The ICRC accepted the first three conditions, and quickly succeeded in obtaining assurances of reciprocity from the Allied Governments concerned. The Committee then requested that the agents, which it already regarded as its delegates, at Singapore, in Siam, and in the Philippines, should be appointed to carry out these visits. The delegate at Singapore was refused approbation, and the Japanese authorities suggested the appointment of a person entirely unknown to the ICRC. The Committee held to its request for official recognition of its representative, but it was never possible to come to an agreement with the Japanese authorities, although the candidate suggested by the Japanese authorities would have been accepted by the ICRC, but only for visits of camps.

This is the place to pay a just tribute to the activities of the delegates chosen on the spot by the ICRC. In spite of the difficulties, they brought all their intelligence and their courage to the work which was demanded of them. Most of them worked without remuneration, in full agreement with their employers, generally Swiss firms.

5. Correspondence

The Pacific War, which spread over thousands of square miles, inevitably put serious obstacles in the way of correspondence. These were still further increased by the strictest censorship imposed as a result of a mistrust even greater than it was elsewhere.

The forwarding of the correspondence of prisoners of war or civil internees to their families was never satisfactory. It was nearly impossible in the southern territories occupied by Japanese forces, Siam, Malaya, Netherlands Indies and Melanesia. The negotiations undertaken by the ICRC had, however, led on April 17, 1942, to a declaration of principle, according to which the Japanese Government "was ready to allow prisoners of war and civil internees to correspond freely with their families in foreign countries". Measures were then taken to send a first instalment of mail on the first ship for exchange of diplomatic personnel repatriated to Japan. Further instalments of mail were to be sent through Siberia.

The Japanese authorities laid down certain conditions concerning the wording and distribution of messages for the Far East, conditions which the ICRC was able to define in the following manner in a letter to the Belgian Red Cross in 1943 :

The regulations issued by the Japanese authorities limit to 25 words the length of the letters that prisoners of war and civil internees in the Far East may receive, and require that these letters should either be typed or written in capitals. These restrictions are enforced for correspondence addressed to all prisoners, either in Japan itself, or in Japanese overseas territories (Korea, South Sea Islands), or in territories occupied by Japan. In the case of civil internees, only letters for those who are in territories occupied by the Japanese forces are subject to these restrictions. For prisoners of war and civil internees presumed to be detained by Japan, but whose names have not yet been communicated letters may be sent through the ICRC to the Japanese Red Cross. In those cases where the names are known, but the address of their camp is not known, the official information bureau on prisoners of war (*Huryojohokyoku*) is responsible for sending such mail through us.

Far from improving, the situation only became worse until towards the end of 1944, when the Japanese Government accepted the following proposals :

(a) Exchange of cable messages (Telegraphic Message Scheme) enabling prisoners of war and civil internees in the Far East to send and receive every year a message of ten words, not including address and signature. All these messages were forwarded by the Central Agency at Geneva. The system was inaugurated

at the beginning of 1945 ; six months later 65,823 messages had been forwarded to Tokyo, and 2,126 had been received from Japan.

(b) Exchange of correspondence enabling civilians at liberty residing in the Netherlands Indies, the Philippines, Burma, and Malaya to give and receive news by means of a form, with set phrases for information and queries, which the sender could fill in simply. This system was also to be put in practice between these territories and the other countries under the Tokyo Government.

At the beginning of the war, the ICRC could only get in touch with its representatives by telegram, since no correspondence by letter was possible. It was difficult to transmit by telegram, with the necessary degree of accuracy, instructions, reports or special requests for information. Furthermore, in order to meet the requirements of the censorship, telegrams to the Southern occupied territories had to be sent in the Japanese language. Correspondence in these circumstances, between Tokyo, Shanghai, Bangkok and Geneva, was very uncertain, and with the southern regions it was almost impossible, reaching the point where certain representatives could not get any message through, either to Geneva or to Tokyo, and in 1945 the ICRC had reason to wonder if they were still alive. It should be noted, however, that the Committee's representative at Singapore was able to communicate with Geneva by cable at the beginning of the war, thanks to the help of a Japanese official responsive to humanitarian ideals. He also managed to get through to Geneva a bundle of correspondence by the hand of the Vice-President of the Japanese Red Cross, who being in Singapore on a mission, took this packet to Tokyo.

Letter-mail, which was later authorized subject to Japanese censorship, was so slow that the ICRC often gave up using it for communication with its representatives. The Committee's correspondence, too, with its delegates, either by letter or by telegram, was subject to censorship under conditions which seriously hampered it. Thus in March 1944, a telegram from a delegate giving an account of his visit to the PW camp at

Fukushima, was considerably amended by the Military Authorities, who were unwilling that the delegate should report the unsatisfactory details that he had noted concerning the rations, sanitary conditions, and discipline of the Allied soldiers detained in this camp. The ICRC and the Allied Authorities, to whom these reports were forwarded, were aware of the difficult position of the delegates, and had to guess at what the messages meant as best they could. It should be noted that as an exceptional measure, and in a few cases which were indeed very rare, the ICRC was authorized to telephone first in German, and then in English, to its delegation at Tokyo.

6. Relief

Immediately after Japan's entry into the war, the question was considered of sending relief to Allied nationals who had fallen into the hands of the Japanese. The difficulties in the way of conveying relief supplies by sea over such great distances, in war zones, access to which was forbidden by the Japanese to any neutral ship, were considerable. The Committee was unsuccessful in its attempts to obtain a permit to bring to the Far East Red Cross ships with the relief stores urgently needed by Allied prisoners and civil internees.

As early as December 30, 1941, the British Red Cross asked the ICRC to organize in the Pacific a line similar to that which was to connect the United States with Europe across the Atlantic. The Australian Red Cross, for its part, expressed its readiness to provide for the first relief supplies from the South, if it could have a neutral ship with an escort and marked with the distinctive emblem of the ICRC.

The Japanese Legation at Berne, when approached on this matter, informed the Committee that the Tokyo Government would not object to a neutral ship being used. When the Japanese stated that they were ready to give relief to prisoners of war and civil internees, in accordance with the provisions of the 1929 Convention, the ICRC asked the Japanese Red Cross if it had in mind the bringing up of relief stores on Red Cross ships. The reply, however, was long in coming. A little later, when the British Government proposed to send to the

Far East a ship with relief stores for its nationals taken prisoner at Singapore, the Committee put the same question to the Japanese Government and requested them to agree in principle to the carrying of relief stores by Red Cross ships. Pending an official reply, and on the basis of the declarations made at Berne, the Committee set about finding a neutral ship¹. In this spirit, the American Red Cross planned to put on the Pacific service a ship transferred to the Swiss flag, and to the ownership of a corporation with Swiss nationality. It further offered to bear the expense involved, and then requested the Committee to ask the belligerent Powers for a safe-conduct for the *Vasaland*, moored in the port of Gothenburg. This ship was to run on the route Seattle-Kobé-Shanghai-Hongkong-Manila. On its return, it would be sent to a United States port indicated by Japan, with relief stores on board for Japan's own nationals.

Knowing that the Japanese, for military reasons, would oppose any traffic in the Yellow Sea and the China Sea, which were war zones, the ICRC thought that it would be easier to secure an agreement for the establishment of a direct line from the United States to Japan, i.e. Seattle-Yokohama, or a line linking the United States with the neutral port of Macao.

Therefore, when making its request for consent by the Tokyo Government in June 1942, the Committee mentioned the route suggested by the American Red Cross and left it to the Japanese Authorities to choose a port, at the same time suggesting that of Macao. The ICRC meanwhile endeavoured to find a ship which might have been bought by the Foundation and employed in the Pacific. The French Government offered the *Wisconsin*, which was detained in the U.S.A. This ship, however, was no longer under French control, since it was being used by the Americans. There was then some thought of using the *Indiana*, another ship under French control in the United States.

The German Authorities at the outset refused to allow the *Vasaland* to leave the Baltic, so that the American Red Cross had to decide to charter the *Kanangoora*, another Swedish ship detained in the United States.

¹ At this time the ICRC was taking steps to set up a "Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports".

At the same time (in August 1942) the Japanese Government announced that it would not allow any neutral ships to enter Japanese waters, nor the waters surrounding territories occupied by Japan. It also refused to allow the establishment of a regular service, but permitted relief to be sent by ships used for the exchange of diplomatists and civilians between Japan and the Allied Powers. On this refusal, the Committee insisted on the creation of a half-way house at Macao, where ships might unload their cargoes. This port, being situated in Portuguese territories, and therefore neutral, was to play in the Far East a part similar to that of Lisbon for the Atlantic. At the end of September, the Committee learnt that the Japanese Red Cross had hinted that "the chances of arriving at an agreement would perhaps be greater if the Red Cross ships had a Japanese crew". The ICRC then contemplated creating a regular line, with a half-way house at Lourenço-Marquez. In October 1942, they submitted the scheme to the Japanese Authorities, and discussed it with the representatives of the American Red Cross. The ICRC, which had already obtained the agreement of the French and German Authorities for the transfer to the Foundation of the Belgian ship *Carlier*, had thought of using this vessel between the United States and South Africa. For the journey between South Africa and the Far East, it proposed to employ, with a Japanese crew, the French ship *Ville de Verdun*, which was interned in Japan.

The occupation of North Africa by the Allies in November 1942 upset the scheme for the purchase of the *Carlier* and, when a month had passed, the Tokyo Government informed the Committee that it did not see any possibility of organizing a transport service between Japan and Lourenço-Marquez.

In spite of this set-back, the question was taken up again. On February 24, 1943, the ICRC submitted to the Japanese Red Cross a proposal of the American Red Cross for the establishment of a service between the United States and Japan, with a half-way house in the Pacific. By this plan, an American ship would have unloaded the goods at a place to be determined, and they would have been distributed at various points in the Far East by a Japanese vessel. In the same way, the American

ship would have unloaded in the United States the relief stores coming from Japan for Japanese prisoners and internees. The United States would even have agreed that the American ship should do the whole trip, the American crew being replaced at the half-way house by a Japanese crew for the Far Eastern part of the journey.

Likewise, on February 26, 1943, the Committee advised its delegation in Japan to resume negotiations with regard to the Lourenço-Marquez-Japan service by a Red Cross ship flying the Swiss flag, and carrying only relief stores for prisoners of war and civil internees of the two belligerent parties. In April 1943, the Japanese Red Cross, in reply to the American proposals, stated that the Japanese Government had no objection in principle to the sending of relief, but that it could not yet change its resolve not to permit the entry of neutral vessels into zones of military operations. Nevertheless, if the American Government were to send relief stores by a Soviet vessel to Vladivostock, Japan would be ready to consider the granting of facilities for the forwarding of such relief supplies. In fact, soon after this, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified Switzerland, in its capacity as Protecting Power, that Japan would send one Japanese ship monthly to Vladivostock, on condition that its passage was guaranteed by safe-conducts issued by the Powers concerned. This news was communicated to the ICRC by the United States Legation in June 1944. In November, a Japanese ship, the *Hakusan Maru*, was sent to the Siberian port of Nakhodka, to take on there part of the cargo of relief supplies that the United States had sent to that port on a Russian ship. The *Hakusan Maru* loaded at Nakhodka 2000 tons of goods delivered at Vladivostock by the American authorities. This consignment included a total of 74,364 parcels.

At the beginning of the year 1945, the Committee thought that negotiations for the establishment of a regular service, if resumed, would have some chance of success. Two lines could have been established : one linking Europe to Sumatra, for the supply of the Sunda Islands, the other between the United States and Japan for food supplies to Japan and China. The

Mangalore and the *Travancore*, Swedish ships which were then in service on the Atlantic line, seemed suitable to be put on to these new routes. From Sumatra, failing neutral cargo vessels, they could use ships of the Japanese coasting trade, which would provide a shuttle service. There were discussions to this end with the Japanese Legation at Berne in February 1945.

The cargo loaded at Vladivostock, as has been seen above, seemed at last to give hopes of the establishment of regularity in the dispatch of relief supplies. Unfortunately, the *Awa Maru*, one of the ships responsible for distributing the relief supplies brought by the *Hakusan Maru* in the Southern occupied territories, was torpedoed on its return voyage on April 1, 1945, by an American submarine. From that time, the Japanese Government refused to entertain any plans for Red Cross ships to ply in the Far East. The Japanese Authorities persisted in this attitude up to the capitulation, and the negotiations, which had been carried on for nearly four years with a view to establishing Red Cross transport services in this part of the world, in the end had no success. In this field, as in others, the fact that the efforts of the ICRC were fruitless was not through neglect of any feasible plan, even the boldest, or because there was failure to urge such a plan upon the Japanese Authorities on every possible occasion.

With the exception of the *Hakusan Maru*, it was only in the ships used for the exchange between Japan and the Allied States of persons in the diplomatic service and civilians, that medical stores, food and correspondence, could reach the Far East by sea.

A suggestion for these consignments was made for the first time in March 1942 by the Committee's delegation in Japan. Food and medical stores would be distributed to the consignees by the Japanese Red Cross. The exchange would take place in the following manner: American or British ships would be sent to Lourenço-Marquez or any other port, to which Japanese ships on their side would also proceed. There would be a representative of the Protecting Power on board, who would at the same time work as the agent of the ICRC. A delegate

of the ICRC would supervise the unloading of the goods, if necessary their storage, and their reloading on to another vessel. A first exchange took place in July 1942. The ship *Asama Maru* went to Lourenço Marquez to meet the *Gripsholm*. It brought 6,993 parcels back to Japan or to the occupied territories. A second exchange ship, the *Tatura Maru*, carried relief supplies from Lourenço-Marquez in September 1942. With regard to this, the delegate at Tokyo wrote as follows :

All the goods, including 48,818 parcels, 360 of which seem to have arrived in a bad condition, were unloaded at Singapore. The delegation in Japan asked the Huryojohokyoku to take the necessary steps, so that 60% of the cargo might be divided among the prisoners of war and civil internee camps of the Singapore sector, and the remaining 40% between the prisoners of war and the civil internee camps in the Netherlands Indies.

In October 1944, according to the reports of the delegate at Tokyo, the *Kamakura Maru* carried a cargo of 47,210 parcels, 32,940 of which were unloaded at Hongkong. Lastly, the *Teia Maru*, going to meet the *Gripsholm*, took on board a number of parcels intended for Allied nationals detained in the Far East. On this subject, the Committee's delegate reported as follows :

Out of a total of 48,760 parcels dispatched 48,581 parcels have been distributed in the Far East. The allocation of these parcels and the collection of reports on them, as well as receipts, when compared to the total despatch of 48,760 parcels, should be regarded as a satisfactory achievement in time of war.

The Committee's delegates were never able to exercise complete supervision of the unloading or the issue of these relief supplies. In most cases the Japanese Authorities took on this work, both in Japan and in the occupied territories. It was only very seldom that the delegates were able to be present at these operations. A certain check on distribution might, however, have been carried out through the individual receipts in each parcel, but it was very difficult to get hold of these documents. The first receipt received was a general receipt, signed only by Japanese officers ; it contained no details as to distribution, and thus did not give the guarantees implicit in receipts signed by the consignees. (It should be noted that a

fairly large number of individual receipts reached the ICRC after the end of hostilities, and among these there were those signed by Generals Percival and Wainwright, and by Governor-General van Starckenborg.)

There was an extensive correspondence with the Japanese authorities about the allocation of these relief supplies. During the war only a few replies came from the Prisoners of War Bureau and from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the information received was seldom very satisfactory. The delegates tried gradually to obtain proofs that all relief supplies which were delivered had, in actual fact, been distributed to the addressees, but they only managed to do this in certain cases and after persistent discussion.

Parcels were distributed to Allied prisoners and civil internees, without distinction of nationality, since the American, British and Netherlands Government had decided to pool these relief supplies.

To sum up, on these four ships more than 150,000 parcels were despatched, and this number reached their destination. If that number be added to the consignment on the *Hakusan Maru*, a total of 225,000 parcels were divided between the Allied prisoners of war and internees in the Far East. The unfortunate sinking of the *Awa Maru* was the reason brought forward by the Japanese authorities for not allowing any further consignments. Thus, no relief supplies reached Japan or the occupied territories after those which had been brought by the *Hakusan Maru* in November 1944.

In these circumstances, local purchase of supplies, a course which should have been taken only to supplement relief arrangements, became essential in practice. We shall confine ourselves here to mention of the general methods and total figures of these purchases.

The necessary funds came from the Allied Governments, from the Allied Red Cross Societies and other relief organizations. At first they were transferable at pleasure, but as from 1944 they had to be sent to Tokyo. Transfer of funds in territories outside Japan was subject to a special permit. Owing to the rate of exchange imposed by the Japanese Government, these

funds lost a part, often a large one, of their purchasing power. Lastly, funds intended for certain destination, had to be converted once or several times into different currencies at a rate fixed by the Japanese authorities themselves. It should further be borne in mind that the activities of certain delegates in these parts never had the sanction of the central Authorities and the local commandants.

About 21 million Swiss francs were transferred to the Far East through Geneva. The various delegations were able to use more than 16 millions. Five millions never reached their destination, since it had not been possible to obtain the "re-transfer" permit.

It was in August 1945, after the Japanese capitulation, that the activities of the ICRC in the Far East were at last able to have scope. For it was on that date that the delegates in the Southern occupied territories were recognized by the Japanese authorities, and that they were able to visit the ex-prisoners of war and civil internees who were still in the camps, and to give them help. Certain delegations, either direct or through Geneva, forwarded to the Allied commands a list of urgently needed relief supplies, to be dropped by parachute in camps indicated to pilots by large national flags or Red Cross flags. This work of the delegations was taken over, as soon as they arrived, by the Allied organizations responsible for the repatriation of ex-prisoners of war and civil internees.

Appeals to public generosity made by certain delegates, particularly at the moment of the capitulation of Japan, made it possible to collect on the spot considerable gifts in kind of great variety, and funds which may be estimated as equivalent to about 1,200,000 Swiss francs.

The annexed table gives a general outline of the use of the funds.

More detailed tables giving the names of the various donors, the use to which these funds were put in local money and the equivalent in Swiss currency, will be found in the annex to Vol. III, which deals with institutions from which gifts were received.

Lastly, mention should be made of the fact that very large

	Funds supplied by Governments and Red Cross Societies	Funds collected on the spot	Total
Drugs, surgical apparatus, dental treatment	953,032.46	38,568.25	991,600.71
Soap, washing and toilet, disinfectants	289,894.03	6,859.10	296,753.13
Food	8,784,470.04	547,737.33	9,332,207.37
Clothing, footwear, thread, buttons	601,196.26	89,197.07	690,393.33
Toilet articles ; tooth brushes, tooth powder, razors, blades, combs, brushes, etc.	134,809.15	2,440.35	137,249.50
Books, games, sports equipment, musical instruments	44,060.30	28,354.40	72,414.70
Beds, mattresses, blankets, sheets, towels	126,899.67	37,359.60	164,259.27
Household utensils, brooms, toilet paper	104,476.50	5,024.42	109,500.92
Office fittings, stationery, pencils, etc.	37,213.47	74.40	37,287.87
Allowances (for civilians)	831,644.73	—,—	831,644.73
Pocket money (prisoners of war and civilians)	1,518,161.47	50,080.14	1,568,241.61
Relief packages	371,161.70	—,—	371,161.70
Tobacco, cigarettes, articles for smokers	486,265.89	177,307.13	663,573.02
Officers' mess (Shanghai)	18,281.15	—,—	18,281.15
Rent, telephone, electricity, heating, repairs to building, furniture, kitchen fittings, wages (800,000 frs. of which was for the "Rosary Hill Red Cross Home" Hong-kong)	899,099.86	44,891.95	943,991.81
Miscellaneous, including carriage of goods, transports, cable charges	913,338.40	155,512.74	1,068,851.14
GENERAL TOTAL Swiss francs	16,114,005.08	1,183,406.88	17,297,411.96

sums reached the Far East through the Protecting Powers. The delegates collaborated closely with their representatives, particularly at Shanghai and at Bangkok.

7. Repatriation

Although Japan was not a party to the 1929 Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war, the ICRC, in its memorandum of February 15, 1944, submitted to the Japanese

Government, as to the other Governments concerned, the question of the repatriation of wounded and sick prisoners of war and civilian internees. No reply was given. The Committee returned to the problem in the month of June of the same year and telegraphed to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposing the acceptance by the Imperial Government of a reciprocal agreement between the parties concerned for the repatriation of wounded and sick, particularly those whose state of health might become worse as a result of the climate. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, the Committee asked, as a preliminary measure, that the prisoners should be transferred to districts where the climate was better ; it even offered to supply all the medical relief necessary for the help of these men.

The reply was received in October 1944 ; it stated that practical difficulties were involved in the repatriation of wounded and sick, but, even so, the Japanese Government was giving the question of the transfer of these persons the required attention and it went on to point out that the authorities, as far as they could, were distributing the necessary medical relief, whilst the proposal of the ICRC to supply such relief remained still under consideration.

On March 28, 1945, a note on the same subject was sent again to the Japanese Government. In June 1945, when the Geneva mission set out, this question had not yet been solved ; it was to form the subject of negotiations by the delegates on their arrival. The Japanese capitulation occurred soon afterwards.

(C.) WORK OF THE DELEGATIONS AND AGENTS OF THE ICRC IN THE FAR EAST

From 1941 to 1947, the humanitarian work of the delegations and agents of the ICRC in the Far East was carried out, in the first instance, in behalf of Allied nationals ; after the capitulation of Japan for the benefit also of the Japanese. The work of the ICRC in the regional conflicts in the Archipelago and Indo-China will be treated under the relevant headings in this Section.

1. Delegation in Japan

(competent for Japan proper, Korea, Formosa and Manchuria)

The ICRC delegation in Japan first set up its headquarters in Yokohama, where it remained from January 1942¹ to 1944. It then moved to Karuizawa, a small hill town not far from Tokyo, at that time under constant bombardment by the Allies. The relief stores, however, were left in Yokohama, and an office was established in Tokyo.

From the outset, the delegation of the ICRC met with many difficulties in the execution of its task². In spite of these, however, it successfully acted in behalf of the American, Australian, British, Canadian and Dutch PW, of whose presence in Japan, Korea, Manchuria and Formosa notification had been received.

It was at once clear to the delegation that the civilian internees were in a better position than the PW. In the camps for civilian internees, the death rate was between one and two per cent, whereas in some PW camps it exceeded 10 per cent. Though they possessed the best equipment, the camps at Mukden had the highest death rate; the cause lay in the change of climate, to which the PW suddenly transferred from hot countries were exposed. Moreover, these removals from warm latitudes to the cold countries of Manchuria and Korea were carried out in extremely bad conditions.

In spite of obstacles, the delegation succeeded in visiting 63 camps, 42 for PW and 21 for civilian internees. They endeavoured to secure for PW and internees means of corresponding with home, and to give them food and clothing bought on the spot, by way of supplementing the relief brought by the "exchange ships"². These attempts however met with the

¹ See above.

It should be noted that in addition to the activities which came within its regular duties, the ICRC delegation assumed the responsibility of negotiating with the Japanese home authorities on general matters concerning the Far East.

² See above.

opposition of the Japanese military authorities, who refused to sanction any purchases other than medical supplies.

The delegation kept up some contact with the Japanese Red Cross. This Society had organized a relief service for PW, which was however nullified by the attitude of the authorities. On several occasions, however, the intermediary of the President of the Japanese Red Cross proved of great help to the delegates. We record also that the Japanese Red Cross always met the expenses entailed by the visits of delegates to the camps.

From 1942 a neutral Committee of the World Alliance of YMCA, of which the delegate of the ICRC was a member, issued relief of an intellectual kind to PW.

In 1943, thanks to the funds pooled by the American and British Red Cross Societies, the delegation was able to purchase and issue medical stores and articles of every-day use which were most urgently needed in the PW camps. This was done successfully in spite of the shrinking supplies for sale in Japan. In 1943, this relief was extended to civilian internees, who until that time had only been helped once, at Christmas 1942, in Yokohama. In this city there were eighteen hospital nurses and one school teacher, an Australian woman, arrested in New Guinea, whose identity the delegation was at first forbidden to report to Geneva.

Notwithstanding the opposition of the Japanese authorities, the agents of the ICRC managed in the spring of 1945 to organize a relief scheme in Kobe and Yokohama, with the help of the funds placed at their disposal by the National Catholic Welfare Conference. With this money, the delegation purchased medical stores and goods originally intended for export to South America, and was able to assist necessitous persons, in particular the victims of the bombardments of Kobe. This scheme was unfortunately brought to a stop on the orders of the Japanese police. Other funds supplied by the same Conference were used to provide grants to certain stateless internees, who were not in receipt of any relief from outside sources.

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. Three days later a second bomb destroyed Nagasaki. The same day also, the date of the entry of the USSR into the war against

Japan, the mission sent by Geneva to take over the delegation arrived in Tokyo.

At the first news of the capitulation of Japan on August 11, the delegation got in touch with the Protecting Powers, with a view to sending a representative of the ICRC and a representative of each of the Protecting Powers to the seven groups of PW camps in Japan. Speedy action was necessary for the effective protection both of PW and of civilian internees. It was equally necessary to make direct contact with the detainees and get an idea of their needs, as they would have to remain in camp until the arrival of the Allied troops. On the grounds of this information a plan was drawn up with the help of the Japanese authorities, whose attitude towards the delegation now changed completely. Only then was the exact number of PW and civilian internees divulged, as well as the location of the camps in which they were detained.

The scheme finally agreed upon provided, first, for the evacuation of the camps near the ports of embarkation on the east coast, then for the transport by rail to the same ports of the PW in the camps situated in the interior and in the west. The aim was to avoid needless exertion for the PW, many of whom were in very poor condition. It offered, moreover, the undoubted advantage of ensuring the feeding of PW up to the moment when they were handed over to the Allies.

The delegates had received definite instructions. They were to compile nominal rolls of PW, by nationalities ; also the sick and wounded were to be listed by categories. They were to assemble all PW, without exception, including those who were under detention or in hospital ; they were to co-operate with the camp medical officers for the removal of the sick and wounded, organize transport and be in attendance personally at the embarkation. The various stages were to be accomplished in co-operation with the representatives of the Protecting Powers, the Japanese camp authorities, the PW camp commandants, and the representatives of the Japanese Red Cross. The last-named offered to supply equipment, such as stretchers, blankets, medical stores, and so forth.

The delegates left Tokyo on August 24, and remained in

constant touch with their chief, who was thus in a position to keep Allied H.Q. informed of the needs of the camps. In addition, the head of the Tokyo delegation went on board a United States warship to discuss the possibility of moving about 6,000 PW held in the Tokyo sector.

To meet the most urgent needs, the delegation asked the Japanese authorities to increase the food rations of all PW in the hands of the Japanese forces, and this was done.

Food supplies were parachuted into the camps by the United States Air Force, who dropped parcels in the camps indicated by the delegates. These camps had been plainly marked, and the PW were ordered to remain in them, until the arrival of the Allied forces who were to take charge of their removal. The capitulation having come suddenly, the U.S. Administration was not able to carry out the evacuation as quickly as the PW wished. Some left the camps on their own, and that added to the problem of assembling them.

After the PW had left, large quantities of food, clothing and medical stores which had been parachuted, remained in the camps. The delegates obtained permission of the American Eighth Army to collect these supplies and issue them to the civilian internees, who after being liberated expressed the wish to remain in Japan. Thereafter, all the goods which could be collected were brought back to Yokohama, where distribution centres were organized, as well as in Tokyo. In addition to the civilian internees, hundreds of persons soon applied for help ; amongst these were Chinese workmen, Russian refugees, Italians, Frenchmen, and stateless persons. They had either been interned by the Japanese, or had lost their property in the air raids. Supreme Allied H.Q. left it to the delegates of the ICRC to give relief to those they considered as victims of the war. Thus some 10,000 persons were assisted.

At Kobe, the United States Consul notified the delegate of the ICRC of the existence of 16,000 Chinese PW. The Allied PW removed from the Hiroshima sector were then about to load on to the ship which was taking them home, five complete wagon-loads of relief goods. The delegate hastened to retrieve these supplies and sent them to the Chinese PW.

When things became more normal in Japan, the delegation promoted the setting up of an International Relief Committee, composed of resident foreigners ; to this it handed over the balance of the relief stocks of the U.S. Army, and the cash donations of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. A gift of 10,000 yen from the same funds was made to the International Catholic Hospital in Tokyo.

It should be noted that before the capitulation of Japan, the ICRC was never allowed to give its attention to the Chinese, Indian or Malayan prisoners, since they were considered by the Japanese to belong to the " Asiatic sphere of co-prosperity ". The refusal was so peremptory and absolute that it precluded any further attempts in this direction.

The delegate in charge of the removal of the PW from the Hiroshima sector had been instructed to study on the spot the relief measures to be taken after the dropping of the atomic bomb. After collecting all relevant information, the head of the delegation in Japan called on Supreme Allied H.Q. and requested that relief measures be undertaken at once. Three days later, on the personal order of General MacArthur, fifteen tons of medicaments and hospital stores were placed at the disposal of the ICRC, for distribution to the victims of the atomic bomb. An American Commission was then leaving for Hiroshima, and the head of the Committee's delegation was invited to accompany it. On September 8, six aircraft left for Hiroshima, each carrying two or three tons of medical stores and foodstuffs; these were issued to the victims, who filled the forty-two hospitals of the city. Relief was also supplied to an orphanage and to the victims of a tidal wave which occurred in the Hiroshima area shortly after the dropping of the atomic bomb.

Apart from these duties, which immediately followed the capitulation, the delegation turned its attention to the Japanese PW in Allied hands. In addition to visiting the camps, the delegation maintained contact with the Allied and Japanese authorities regarding all general matters which were dealt with at Tokyo—not only concerning Japan proper, but all the territories formerly occupied by Japan—in matters connected with repatriation, correspondence, and relief.

The German community in Japan were repatriated as soon as transport became available. The ICRC also helped those amongst them who were in need.

2. Delegation in Shanghai

From the beginning of the war, the ICRC tried to obtain permission of the Japanese to establish delegations in occupied China. Permission was, however, granted only for Shanghai, and subject to certain conditions: the delegation was to enter into official contact only with the Japanese Consulate and not with the military authorities; no relief measures were to be undertaken without the previous consent of the Japanese authorities; communications with the outside world would be censored; interventions in behalf of persons detained by the Japanese police were strictly prohibited.

In April 1942, the delegation began its work for the PW and civilian internees, both in the Haiphong Road Camp and in the Civilian Assembly Centres. The attitude of the authorities, who did not recognize the 1929 Convention, made this task difficult. (It will be recalled that the 1929 Convention had not been ratified by Japan.) On one occasion the delegate of the ICRC, who tried to assist some PW who had attempted to escape, referred to this Convention. The reply was that the Japanese authorities had at their service experts well versed in the law of nations, and that in any case "they made their own international law".

In order to extend his field of work, the delegate in Shanghai secured the co-operation of correspondents in certain areas. He found Swiss nationals in Canton, Peking, Tientsin and Tsingtao willing to accept this task, in addition to their other official duties.

Finally, a more or less regular correspondence was carried on between the delegation in Shanghai and that in Chungking, that is to say, between occupied China and free China. This mail concerned especially enquiries and messages, as this route was shorter and more certain than by the Trans-Siberian line.

Allied PW. — From January 1942, Allied PW were removed from the Pacific Islands and from Tientsin to a camp in Shanghai. The delegate of the ICRC at once set about making lists of these men. Some of them tried to escape and were imprisoned as deserters: the delegate took repeated steps in their behalf, but these were quite unavailing, as the Japanese authorities disregarded every appeal. When, at the beginning of 1942, he tried to organize a relief service for the PW, he met with a blank refusal, the Japanese asserting that the prisoners "lacked nothing". He managed, however, to organize two relief consignments, and parcels sent by the American Residents Association in Shanghai were handed to the U.S. prisoners. The Consulate-General of Japan undertook to see that the parcels sent by the British Residents Association should be delivered to the British seamen interned in the Shanghai Camp. In spite of this assurance, the parcels never reached the detainees.

In June 1942, the same Consulate-General advised the delegation that they would no longer attend to PW matters, since the Liaison Bureau of the Japanese Army was the only competent authority for this question. After repeated and insistent applications, the delegation obtained permission of the Bureau to organize a fortnightly relief service in behalf of the prisoners. These relief supplies were drawn either from the stocks which the American Red Cross had built up before the U.S. entered the war, part of which it had been possible to retrieve, or from the donations of resident foreigners. Another source was supplies purchased with the money paid by the Japanese authorities for American Red Cross stores which had been requisitioned. When these funds were exhausted, the delegation drew on funds sent by Geneva, originating from Allied Red Societies. Unfortunately, the Japanese authorities shortly afterwards ruled that the delegation should do no relief work among PW except with funds transferred through the Yokohama Specie Bank, at the official rate of exchange. This rate had so little relation to the purchasing power of the Shanghai dollar that, according to the report of the delegate, "if the sum of 100,000 Swiss francs received in February 1945, had been shared among the thousand PW of the camp, it would have been barely

sufficient to give each PW four ounces of bacon ". The delegate added :

As the Japanese authorities had refused to go back on their decision, in spite of our many appeals, we were faced with the alternatives of suspending our help to the PW (who would then probably have been reduced to a state of semi-starvation), or of infringing the orders of the Japanese authorities, and so jeopardizing our personal credit. Obviously, we could not let the PW down... The Japanese camp commandant, who was quite familiar with the situation, told us bluntly that he could not run the camp satisfactorily on the allocation granted by Tokyo, in view of the high prices prevailing in Shanghai. On several occasions he asked us earnestly to continue our relief donations, and if possible, to increase rather than diminish them. It was all the same to him where we got our funds from : not being a banker, he did not understand the financial regulations of the Government.

By overriding the Japanese regulations—a difficult and risky operation ¹—the delegation was able to continue giving effective relief, and incidentally saved Allied donors a sum of nearly eight million Swiss francs. The system of fortnightly relief worked perfectly up to the closing of the PW camp at Shanghai in May 1945. By that time the number of PW had dropped from 1,500 to 1,000.

In order to supply the things most needed in the way of relief, the delegation asked the senior officers and the chief medical officer to draw up a list of what they required. The foodstuffs supplied from June 1942 to May 1943, represented an average of 225 to 250 grammes daily per head. The delegation even succeeded in sending fresh fruit. The clothing provided was particularly welcome during the years 1942-43, when the PW were short of underwear and garments of all kinds. The delegation procured large quantities of vests, shirts, boots and socks, and so on, buying these either direct from the Shanghai merchants, or drawing from the stocks that, at the request of the delegate, the Municipal Council had placed at the disposal of the

¹ Obviously, if the ICRC had been allowed to carry on its regular humanitarian activity within the framework of the Convention, it would never have had recourse to agencies which evaded government regulations.

ICRC after the Home Guard of the town had been disbanded. The delegation also managed to find stoves and fuel. Unfortunately, from the beginning of 1944, it was difficult to supply the PW with enough fuel.

Having observed that the medical equipment of the camp was totally inadequate, the delegate succeeded in obtaining and installing the apparatus for a proper X-Ray service, a surgical department with fully equipped operating theatre, and a dental service, which contributed towards maintaining or improving the health of the PW. The delegate even found dentures, which were made in Shanghai according to the instructions supplied by the camp dentists. When on two occasions the authorities removed the camp to another district of Shanghai, the medical and hygiene equipment was also transferred.

At Christmas, the delegation collected gifts from the neutral and non-interned residents, and added the donations received from national Red Cross Societies. Responding to these efforts the PW wrote, for example, in 1942: "It will be a long time before Christmas is forgotten by the soldiers and the seamen of the U.S., British and Norwegian merchant marines interned in the Shanghai Camp".

Official visits to the camp could only be made with the consent of the Ministry of War at Tokyo. Permission was usually granted two or three weeks after the application had been made, and this had to be renewed for each separate visit. The delegate was generally informed that he could visit the camp on the day following the receipt of the permission. After consultation with the spokesmen and the camp commandants, he was allowed to inspect the buildings and equipment and sometimes to talk to the PW—a privilege contrary to the rules applied in other PW camps in Japanese hands. The delegate could even pay an occasional private visit to the two American and British officers who acted as camp leaders.

On May 2, 1945, the Japanese officer in charge of the camp took it upon himself to advise the delegate confidentially that the camp was about to be transferred to North China, and asked him to send a large supply of foodstuffs and clothing which the PW might need on the journey. This was done

immediately, at the cost of considerable effort. On May 5, the PW left Shanghai. A member of the delegation managed to let them know that the ICRC would continue, as far as possible, to look after their interests. The delegate was also advised by the camp commandant that 25 PW could not leave Shanghai, for reasons of health or age; he and a representative of the Protecting Power then took steps to see that these men were admitted into a Shanghai hospital for treatment. Furthermore, the delegate of the ICRC did in fact succeed in helping the PW who had left Shanghai in the course of their various moves in China. Thanks to his personal relations with the camp commandant, whom he went to see in Peking, and to the valuable help of his correspondent in that city, the delegate was able to have issued, within a few hours, the food and clothing needed by the PW for the successive stages of their journey to Japan, which they reached in the month of July 1945.

Civilian internees. — In November 1942, the Japanese began to arrest certain Allied nationals. At first, neither the representatives of the Protecting Power, nor the delegation of the ICRC were allowed to look after the civilians, who had been assembled in a camp situated at Haiphong Road, in a suburb of the city. The Japanese preferred to deal direct with the American and British Residents Associations on all matters relating to these internees.

In March 1943, the Residents Associations were dissolved, and many of their members interned. The Japanese authorities then accepted the offer of the ICRC to organise a relief service and to forward to Shanghai the correspondence of the internees of the Haiphong Road Camp. A fortnightly parcel service was established. On its side, the Protecting Power was authorized to send monthly allowances, which enabled the detainees to buy food. The Haiphong Road Camp differed from other "civil assembly centres" by the fact that it was placed under the Japanese military authorities, and that the status of the internees was very similar to that of the PW. However, the lists of the internees of this camp were sent to Geneva, not by

the Japanese military authorities, but by the delegation in Shanghai.

At the time of their arrest the internees of the Haiphong Road Camp were allowed to take with them only a small suitcase containing strict essentials. Even so, for quite a long time, they had less to endure than the PW. For reasons that are obscure, the situation changed in 1944. In January 1945, the treatment of the internees appeared so bad, that the delegate advised Geneva of the situation, adding that on his last visit he was forbidden to talk to the inmates. The ICRC instructed the delegate to do everything he could to visit the camp as quickly as possible and try to find out the reasons for the critical situation of the internees. The representative of the Protecting Power in Shanghai received similar instructions. Unfortunately, the necessary permission from the Ministry of War in Tokyo did not reach Shanghai before the internees were removed. On July 8, they were sent to Fengtai, in North China, without the delegation having been informed or given an opportunity to prepare relief measures. This transfer, for which cattle-trucks were used, took five days. So bad were the conditions, with the heat and the lack of food, that eighty per cent of the internees were unable to walk on their arrival. In spite of their reiterated appeals, neither the delegate of the ICRC nor his representative at Peking was allowed to visit the internees. Shortly afterwards hostilities came to an end, and the internees were accommodated in the hotels of Peking. The representative of the ICRC in that city at once set about providing them with food and clothes, during the six weeks that elapsed before they were sent back to Shanghai. The funds required for this scheme were subscribed locally.

The other "civil assembly centres", which were first set up in January 1943, were placed under the control of the Japanese civil authority, in this case the Consulate-General of Japan. The delegate of the ICRC at once got in touch with the representatives of the Protecting Power and the American, British and Netherlands Residents Associations. It was decided that the Swiss Consulate, as representative of the Protecting Power, would deal with all financial questions. The Japanese authorities

permitted only the delegation of the ICRC to set up and direct a liaison service with the other civil assembly centres. This service was in charge of the purchase and despatch of relief, and of the forwarding of mail. The delegation set up an office which, in the first week, received nearly 10,000 parcels. The Japanese Consulate authorised only one delivery a month, for each camp. The weight of individual parcels was not to exceed twenty English pounds, later reduced to ten. The Japanese authorities insisted on being given the lists of donors and allowed each of these to send only five parcels. Although these rules complicated their task, the delegation succeeded in making the system work satisfactorily.

The goods were transported either by truck or by barge. As the situation of the Japanese army grew more critical, transport became more and more precarious, being especially affected by the warfare between Chinese partisans. It became necessary to fall back on trains for conveying the supplies, in spite of the difficulty of finding the necessary railway wagons at short notice.

The delegates visited the camps every time they were granted permission ; from 1944 onwards they even made their visits without the sanction of the Japanese Consulate-General. Sometimes also, the members of the delegation accompanied the relief consignments and succeeded in obtaining valuable information.

It should be mentioned in this connection that serious accusations and complaints were made by certain of the internees against the delegate of the ICRC. These accusations had their roots in the fact that forty per cent of the internees had neither friends nor relatives in Shanghai who could send them parcels. To clear the delegate, who certainly did not fail in his task and did not deserve the criticism that was levelled at him, we must explain that all the relief consignments sent to the camps bore the mark "Gift of the ICRC", merely as required by the Japanese authorities, who had made the rule that the relief given to internees must be absolutely free. The ICRC itself never had any funds at its disposal for these consignments ; they were financed by the Governments, which sent the necessary fund to the Protecting Power. The Swiss Consulate-General, acting

in the name of the Protecting Power, exercised strict control of the allocation of relief. This control was so severe that, until the middle of 1944, relief could be issued only against a promissory note signed by the recipient. It will be seen that, given the Japanese regulations, the ICRC acted merely as an intermediary—an indispensable one, it is true. It should be remembered also that the internees, who were used to a high standard of living, were particularly sensitive to the discomforts of internment; their complaints were proportionately sharp.

Numerous letters from both PW and internees have been received which bear witness not only to the complete good faith of the delegate, but also to the remarkable work he achieved in Shanghai.

To summarise : the special service organized by the delegation in Shanghai for the help of the 6,000 internees, lodged in eight civil assembly centres, had a dual purpose : (1) to forward thousands of parcels sent by the friends and relatives of the internees in Shanghai ; (2) to distribute relief to those internees who had neither friends nor relatives. After much negotiation, the Swiss Consulate in its capacity as agency of the Protecting Power, was able to make purchases ; it was thus possible to issue 116,379 parcels to the internees in the assembly centres.

The delegation also secured private donations for the internees at Christmas, including 400 parcels for issue to all the children. These parcels were the more welcome as the children were not reckoned in the ordinary distributions. The cost of the Christmas parcels was covered by funds collected among the French and Swiss communities in Shanghai. A single subscriber gave 80 per cent of the amount collected. In 1945, a donation by a hospital in the town made it possible for small sums to be distributed as pocket money to internees at the time of their release.

In addition to the relief consignments, the delegation handled the correspondence of the civil assembly centres. The following measures were agreed upon with the Japanese authorities :

(a) Each internee could send a message abroad once a month, on Form 61 C.

(b) Each internee could send a local message once a month on a form established for this purpose.

(c) Telegrams from abroad could be handed to the internees through the dual intermediary of the ICRC and of the Japanese Consulate-General.

(d) The internees were allowed to send telegrams abroad, through the intermediary of the ICRC, after approval by the camp commandant.

In spite of the delays due to the Japanese censor, which were sometimes considerable, over 250,000 messages were received and sent through the delegation.

After the capitulation of Japan, the civil assembly centres came under the control of the Swiss Consulate, as agent of the Protecting Power, until the arrival of the representatives of the British and American Red Cross Societies relieved the delegation of its responsibilities to the internees. Ex-internees in need continued to be the concern of the delegation, and the ICRC message scheme was maintained.

Among the many persons whom the ICRC was able to help through its delegate, mention should also be made of necessitous civilians who were at liberty. These included the aged parents, wives and children of the internees or PW, who were unable for any reason to earn a living, or whose earnings were insufficient to maintain them.

Prior to the war, the British Residents' Association had started a relief fund, called "Dean's Fund", for persons in need. When all the British nationals were interned, the delegate of the ICRC, in agreement with the occupying authorities, managed this fund and continued the relief given by this society. About eighty persons were helped; amongst them were some forty children, also some aged folk unable to earn a living. This fund, which was exhausted at the beginning of October 1943, unfortunately could not be replenished, in spite of the applications made to the British authorities by the Protecting Power, and to the British Red Cross by the ICRC.

Other civilians of various nationalities (Greeks, Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks, Iranians, Irish and Poles) also appealed for help

to the ICRC. Up to the autumn of 1943, the delegate was able to provide some support for most of the poorest cases, thanks to the generosity of some of their wealthier compatriots, who were generally grouped in associations. Later, the Governments concerned sent some funds through Geneva.

The position of the ICRC in regard to a certain category of civilians, called "European refugees", was always rather difficult. These were mainly German or Austrian Jews, who arrived in Shanghai between 1936 and 1941, and numbered several thousand. As soon as assigned residences had been arranged for these Jews, the Japanese authorities issued strict instructions prohibiting the ICRC from all action in their behalf. The delegation informed Geneva of the situation of these persons, and this information was passed on to the Joint Distribution Committee in New York, who sent money direct to the group. Consequently, the situation of these particular civilians was at no time critical.

In addition, the delegate, as soon as he had the opportunity and the means, opened a soup kitchen for the poor.

With the arrival of the Allied troops, the Japanese military personnel in China were put into internment camps. They were however repatriated fairly soon. As long as they remained, the delegation in Shanghai—which then became the official delegation for the whole of China—visited them regularly until their departure. The message service, which had been arranged during the war for PW and civilian internees, was continued for these men.

3. Delegation in Hong-Kong

When the British possession of Hong-Kong fell to the Japanese on December 25, 1941, the ICRC at once appointed a delegate to work in that city. This appointment did not receive the assent of the Japanese authorities, however, until June 1942.

Since Hong-Kong was situated in the centre of important military operations, the needs of the PW, interned civilians, and numerous destitute civilians were very great. In order to help these persons, the delegate had to deal principally with the

military authorities, who showed no desire to facilitate his task. On the contrary, by censoring the mail, requiring him to furnish monthly reports, notifications concerning any changes in his staff, and so on, they did much to hinder his work.

The delegate's task was complicated still further by the fact that the authorizations defining the scope of his activities were frequently interpreted by the Japanese authorities in contradictory ways, with the result that it was difficult for him to know exactly what he was permitted to do for the victims of the war. In 1945, for instance, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs went back on the essentials of the agreement which it had made in 1942, concerning the range allowed to the delegation for its work. The delegate, for the most part, was kept in complete darkness about the changes in the composition of camps. He received no notifications of births, deaths, internments, or releases, nor was he informed of the fluctuations in the amount of the food ration supplied to interned persons.

The delegate of the ICRC in Shanghai was sent to Hong-Kong in order to help the officially accredited delegate in that city in the initial stages of the work. It was clear to him, from the moment of his first contact with the Japanese authorities, that difficulties were likely to arise owing to the unhelpful attitude of these authorities towards the new delegation. He did not hesitate, therefore, to establish courteous relations with them. Later, he was criticised by certain Allied nationals for this policy. At the end of the war, however, those persons who had been most critical recognized that he had acted for the best in difficult circumstances.

The delegate in Hong-Kong was faced with many problems, due especially to the fact that no representative of the Protecting Power was able to carry out his functions in that city. He had to organize a Civilian Message service for abroad ; issue to PW and interned civilians the mail arriving from the interior ; transmit telegrams ; set on foot enquiries concerning persons presumed to have been living in Hong-Kong at the outbreak of the war ; forward books or gifts of money from private persons to PW and civilian internees ; purchase, with funds donated from outside, and hand over parcels for PW and

civilian internees ; compile lists of PW and fill out cards for each individual case ; manage British funds to be employed for the following purposes : (1) purchase of relief supplies for British PW, for interned British civilians, and for the Bowen Road Military Hospital ; (2) pocket-money for PW and civilian internees, and subsistence grants for certain non-interned civilians ; (3) payment of doctors' and dentists' fees.

Gifts in kind, and funds subscribed from official and private sources, for PW, civilian internees, and non-interned civilians, reached large totals.

The distribution of grants to non-interned civilians (families of PW and civilian internees) was at first undertaken by the British Chief Medical Officer in Hong-Kong, who, on account of his qualifications, was not interned by the Japanese. As soon as the funds for that purpose reached it, in January 1943, the delegation took the non-interned civilians in need into its care. Distinctions had to be made, in order that the funds available might give adequate help to those in greatest need. This practice of making distinctions obviously gave rise to occasional criticism.

There were also in Hong-Kong a great many necessitous civilians (refugees from various countries), who did not come within the above-mentioned category, but who applied to the Committee's delegation for help. This was granted, in so far as available means allowed. The work soon came to an end ; in November 1942, the Japanese authorities noted the presence of a large number of needy Orientals among these recipients of relief, and ordered the delegate to stop this aid and to confine his activities strictly to PW and to interned civilians and their relatives.

Prisoners of war. — The PW in Hong-Kong numbered about 3,000. In spite of the difficulties already referred to, the delegate succeeded in having food parcels, articles of every-day use, and pocket-money sent to them. Unfortunately, the price of commodities rose steadily and the expenses involved were considerable. Thus, the scale of this relief sometimes fell short of what was needed.

Mention should be made, for instance, of the peculiar obstacles of an administrative kind which hampered the despatch of relief consignments. Firstly, an application had to be made to the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, who required to be furnished with a list stating the nature and quantity of the relief goods. The permission, if granted, was handed to the delegation two days before the supplies were to be delivered. Transport had then to be secured (often it was necessary to engage hundreds of porters), and steps taken to prevent pilfering.

The PW were housed in two camps and in the Bowen Road Military Hospital. In Hong-Kong as in Shanghai, visiting of the camps by the delegate was subject to the previous approval of the Tokyo authorities, a sanction that was sometimes a long time in coming. These visits were rendered still more difficult by the fact that the Japanese military took exceedingly severe measures to prevent the PW from getting in touch with the delegate and so betraying their true situation. The delegate was always accompanied by at least six Japanese, and the PW, especially the officers, had to resort to ingenious, but risky devices for conveying information to him. Once, for instance, during a visit, a French PW who had been a member of the Hong-Kong volunteer defence forces, shook hands with the delegate, and at the same time slipped to him a small piece of bamboo containing a minute piece of paper on which was written valuable information regarding the prisoners' needs, especially in medical stores. Another time, a PW who openly told the delegate that he and his compatriots were starved, was severely beaten.

Civilian Internees. — These numbered about 2,500 and were detained in Camp Stanley. Towards the end of 1944, some were transferred to a new camp at Kowloon. The funds supplied to the ICRC by the British authorities for relief for these internees, were either allocated in the form of monthly grants, or used to purchase foodstuffs and other goods on the spot. But, as has been said, the rise in prices, and the rate of exchange fixed by the Japanese, put an end to these relief purchases. Consequently, the internees asked the delegate to arrange for the sale of

valuables. The delegate agreed, on condition that a minimum price for each article be fixed by the owner ; he would then do his best to get a better figure. This scheme was carried out in July 1944, and the proceeds were, in some instances, three times the price fixed by the owners. In April 1945, the Japanese authorities ordered this system to be stopped ; the delegate, in spite of his protests, received no explanation of this policy until the capitulation. As a matter of fact, certain Japanese had continued to collect the articles for sale and, letting the internees believe that the ICRC was still conducting this business, themselves took charge of the selling and handed over to the owners only a part of the proceeds, thus making a handsome profit. In the circumstances, it is understandable that the internees, who were unaware that these sales were no longer being negotiated by the Committee's delegation, sometimes expressed criticism of the Hong-Kong delegate.

As the Protecting Power was not represented in Hong-Kong, it was agreed, at the suggestion of the Allies and with the consent of the ICRC and the Japanese authorities, that the Committee's delegate in that city should select, according to specified criteria, from amongst seriously ill, the women and children, the persons eligible for repatriation under an agreement made between the Japanese Government and the Protecting Power.

Thus, in November 1943, a number of British civilians from Hong-Kong were exchanged at Goa, in Portuguese territory. Throughout 1944, negotiations proceeded for a similar exchange arrangement, to be conducted in the same conditions, and which was to have enabled 700 British nationals of Hong-Kong to be released. Unhappily, this plan fell through.

The delegate in Hong-Kong gave help in the work of relief for the families of internees. These non-interned British citizen, numbering about 1,100, were destitute.

In 1943, they received a monthly subsistence allowance, a rent allowance, and free medical and dental care, including treatment in hospital, if needed. This relief work at the beginning entailed a monthly expenditure of 50,000 "military yen" (occupation currency), which corresponded to about 50,000 Swiss francs. As the local authorities supplied rice, flour, sugar,

oil, salt, and so on at reduced prices, this sum made it possible for a great many families to be supported. Four doctors provided regular medical and dental care, whilst beds and rooms were reserved for patients at the French Hospital. This system, though satisfactory at first, soon proved to be inadequate, as the result of the rise in prices.

The delegate then planned the establishing of a Home, where the families of interned civilians would receive food and medical care, and where expenses would be considerably reduced. This plan was approved by the occupation authorities, who stated that persons refusing to go to this Home would not be troubled, but would no longer receive allowances from the ICRC. An isolated building belonging to the Spanish Dominicans was rented, and the Home established under the name "Rosary Hill Red Cross Home". About 800 persons at once applied for admission; but as Rosary Hill could not accommodate so many, it was decided that only those whose circumstances were the most precarious would be given shelter. This discrimination provoked a certain number of complaints. All the same, it is a fact that Rosary Hill rescued 682 civilians from destitution. Furthermore, about fifty people who were old or invalid were taken in at the French Hospital.

In the eighteen months during which the many destitute civilians found refuge at Rosary Hill, the cost of living steadily rose. In the spring of 1945, the daily upkeep—including cost of medicines and heating—was thirty-five times higher than when the Home was opened in October 1944. This alarming situation led the delegate in April, 1945, to urge all those who could do so to leave the Home. In May 1945, 350 persons left for Macao, a Portuguese possession, where living was much cheaper and where they could be helped by the British Consulate. This proved to be an opportune step, inasmuch as the funds sent from Geneva had been blocked in Tokyo since March. In order, therefore, to secure funds, the delegate had to draw upon his own resources or borrow. By acting thus at his own risk, he was able to obtain goods to the value of 70,000 Swiss francs. These same goods, if paid for with funds transferred by official channels, would have cost over 2,000,000 Swiss francs.

Finally, in order to save the remaining inmates of Rosary Hill from starvation, he was obliged to suspend the grants of pocket-money to PW and interned civilians during the last few weeks of the war.

As regards United States citizens, nineteen PW, eighteen civilians internees, and nine families comprising a total of 35 non-interned persons, were helped by means of the funds furnished to the delegate at Hong-Kong by the American Government and Red Cross.

Persons of other nationalities likewise sought help from the ICRC. These included about one hundred Latin Americans, three Dutch, one Czech, one Hungarian, and several Russians. The Latin American Governments and that of the Netherlands provided small sums for their nationals in distress; but the delegate lacked the necessary funds to organize relief on a regular basis for these people. By March 1944, so many requests were being received from nationals of other Allied countries that, upon the proposal of the delegate, a number of persons were interned in the new Kowloon military camp, and were in that way saved from destitution.

The delegate was obliged to refrain from giving assistance to Indian, Philippine, and Chinese nationals. The Japanese authorities had forbidden him to do so, threatening, if he persisted, to put a stop to all his relief activities.

* * *

After the capitulation, the delegate was able to visit all the camps in the Hong-Kong area, in order to ascertain the most urgent needs of the internees, who were awaiting their repatriation or return to ordinary civil life. The relief supplies with which he was able to furnish them included not only foodstuffs and medicaments, but also office supplies, radio sets, writing-paper, and so forth.

At the request of the British Government, the delegate telegraphed to the Portuguese Red Cross, in Macao, asking them to arrange for the sending of food supplies and coal for the European colony in Hong-Kong. Transport was arranged for

Camp Stanley, so that the former detainees might be visited by their relatives and friends.

When British forces arrived in the city on August 30, the delegate placed his staff and office facilities at the disposal of the Australian Red Cross representatives and relief units for PW. He also supplied the Australian Red Cross with the names of persons most urgently in need of assistance.

At the beginning of September 1945, 400 tons of Australian Red Cross relief supplies were issued to former PW and civilian internees, prior to their repatriation. By December 1945, all had been sent home.

As soon as Japan capitulated, the Hong-Kong delegation undertook relief work for captured Japanese military personnel. Camps were visited and relief supplies distributed. This relief included, in particular, message-forms to be filled in and despatched to relatives in Japan. The repatriation of these Japanese was soon completed, and the work of the Hong-Kong delegation thus came to an end.

4. Delegation in Siam (Thailand)

Siam was drawn into the war against the United States and Great Britain at the beginning of 1942.

Many PW camps had been set up on Siamese territory, under the control of Japanese troops, as well as camps for interned civilians administered by the Siamese authorities. There were also a large number of camps for Asiatic labourers recruited in South-East Asia for the building of the Burmese Railway.

The delegate appointed by the ICRC in 1943 had been officially recognized by the Siamese authorities, but the Tokyo Government refused to endorse this arrangement. He was therefore able to act officially in the interests of the civilian internees, but could never secure the sanction of the Japanese authorities to undertake relief work for PW, or for the labourers engaged on the construction of the railway. He endeavoured, on several occasions, to alter this state of affairs, but his very first request met with a refusal, on the part of the Japanese Embassy

in Bangkok, to state the number of the PW transferred from Singapore to Siam. According to the information in his possession, these amounted to about 30,000.

He made a further attempt, in September 1943, and was again told that neither the Tokyo Government nor the Japanese Embassy in Siam recognized his appointment. However, he was given permission, without any restrictions whatever, to send relief supplies and pocket money to PW. The Japanese Embassy undertook to forward these supplies to the Japanese military authorities, and to furnish receipts signed by the camp commandants and camp leaders. The letter addressed by the Japanese Ambassador to the delegate a few days later stipulated, however, that all the funds required for his relief schemes must be sent through Tokyo, and that he was in no case to make use of his own personal resources for this purpose, nor contract loans. This letter also stated :

The Japanese Government recognizes officially the representatives of the ICRC only in Japan, in Shanghai, and in Hong-Kong¹. Relief work in Siam will, therefore, be dealt with in the same way as for the population in general. The Japanese military authorities suggest that this relief should consist principally of foodstuffs, toilet articles and cigarettes. There are no restrictions with regard to pocket-money, but the distribution of this, as of relief parcels, lies solely within the competence of the Japanese military authorities.

With regard to interned civilians, the delegate is requested to enter into contact with the Siamese Government.

Prisoners of war. — The delegation received from the Protecting Power the funds required for the purchase of relief for PW. It undertook these purchases, as well as the packing and despatch of the relief supplies to the camps known to it.

The delays in certain transfers of funds meant that the Protecting Power had not always cash available at the required moment. Thanks to the co-operation of a Swiss firm, the delegation was, however, always able to obtain the needed supplies at the most advantageous prices. From November 1943 to

¹ On the subject of the appointment of delegates in the Southern occupied territories, see above.

July 1945, 11,774 parcels of assorted goods and medicaments were despatched to PW in nine consignments. These men were, for the most part, British, New Zealanders and Australians.

The first six consignments were handed over to the Japanese military authorities at Bangkok railway-station ; the remainder were sent direct by the delegation to the camp authorities.

The Protecting Power undertook, for its part, to hand to the Japanese Embassy, for transmission to the military authorities, funds to provide assistance for PW in hospital, and pocket-money for other categories.

In an attempt to help the Dutch PW also, as the Protecting Power had no funds available for these men, the ICRC obtained 280,000 Swiss francs from the Netherlands Red Cross. The delegate asked the Japanese authorities for permission to purchase on the spot food supplies for these men. This application was refused, however, the authorities requiring that the funds be handed over to them, so that they might make these purchases themselves. As an exception, the delegate was allowed to send a consignment which he had already prepared for despatch.

In October 1944, in spite of the official veto, he succeeded in sending a second consignment of relief to Dutch PW. Pocket-money for these prisoners was also included on both these occasions.

Having learned through indirect sources that the health situation amongst PW was bad and that they were dying by hundreds, the delegate made every effort to send them medical supplies. The Siamese government depot and the principal Bangkok dispensaries had no stocks available, but the Siamese Red Cross agreed to supply an assortment of medical stores, although its own reserves were low. In face of so serious a situation, the delegate, aided by his employees, to whose devotion he gives the highest praise, resorted to all possible means in order to send the PW the medical stores they needed. Often he had to buy on the black market and secure information regarding PW needs without the knowledge of the Japanese authorities. Most of these stores were brought up by stealth and delivered at night. The job was a risky one, but of vital importance for the

men. Thirty consignments, comprising 395 cases, were delivered in this way between August 28, 1943 and September 30, 1945. These consignments included preparations of all kinds, medical and surgical instruments, bandages, dental equipment, etc.

Early in 1945, the delegate also succeeded in supplying medicaments to Dutch PW. A consignment of 20 cases was despatched early in 1945, by means of funds made available by the Protecting Power.

When the capitulation took place, and the customary opposition on the part of the Japanese military authorities was removed the delegate was free to look after the wants of the 30,000 American, Australian, British and Dutch PW. The PW medical officers submitted lists of the medical stores and instruments needed, and the relief for which request had been cabled to London and India, soon arrived.

The Siamese Government and people endeavoured to improve the conditions of the PW awaiting release. Thousands of them were taken to Bangkok, where they received all possible care. Concerts and teas were organized for their benefit. The delegate launched an appeal which brought in over a million "bât" (approximately 400,000 Swiss francs). The Siamese Red Cross offered its assistance, and its personnel spared no efforts to help the released men. Ambulances were lent by the Ministry of Health. Thanks to donations received from the public, large quantities of books and writing-paper were sent to the men who were still awaiting release. Eight hundred pairs of spectacles (500 of which were sent by air from Geneva) were supplied by the delegation. It worked in close touch not only with the Siamese Red Cross, but also with the YMCA, which furnished large quantities of relief supplies. The Australian Red Cross sent large consignments of food, such as eggs and fish, by air.

The Protecting Powers, for their part, contributed 800,000 bât towards the purchase of relief.

Upon the arrival of the Allied troops, 113,000 Japanese soldiers surrendered. These were interned and classed as "Surrendered Enemy Personnel". These men were not considered as covered by the terms of the Convention; but as their money had not been confiscated, they were able to buy all that they needed, and

the delegate was not therefore required to give them relief. Nevertheless, he visited the camps in which they were detained.

Civilian Internees. — The Siamese authorities had interned a certain number of British and Dutch citizens (178 British and five Dutch) in December 1941. These interned persons were humanely treated. Meals were supplied by the hotels, to begin with, then in 1944 a kitchen was installed in the camp. The food was satisfactory, both as regards quality and quantity. The cost of food and upkeep was deducted from the grant paid by the Government, which, by 1942, amounted to 0,50 bât per head daily. British internees were authorized to borrow up to 60 bât per month. The relief funds were managed by the two Protecting Powers. Medical attention was provided by a Siamese doctor who visited the camp each week. Patients were admitted to hospital free of charge, and were required to pay only for such medicines as were not in stock. The delegate was able to visit the camp regularly ; he supplied the internees with quantities of reading matter, textbooks and similar supplies.

Refugees. — Following the Japanese capitulation, the delegate was called upon in October 1945 to look after 200 French refugees, mainly women and children, from Indo-China, where serious disturbances had broken out. These refugees arrived in Siam in a deplorable condition. The French Legation undertook at once to provide them with accommodation, but turned to the delegation for help to meet their other needs. The latter advanced a sum of about 100,000 bât out of the funds of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The delegation also purchased certain urgently needed supplies for these refugees who left Bangkok at the end of November.

The situation having become worse in Java, 4,500 Dutch women and children, who had been interned by the Japanese in camps on the island, were taken to Siam. They were all housed in hotels and institutions in Bangkok, before being lodged in two reception camps. The delegation was able to provide them with a few comforts, by drawing on the funds of the Conference.

Workers. — During the war, the Japanese recruited Asiatic labour—Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Javanese—for the construction of the Burmese Railway. These labourers worked in the jungle, in the most deplorable conditions, ill fed, without sanitation or medical care. They died by thousands, but, as long as the Japanese occupation lasted, it was impossible to help them.

After the capitulation, the delegate in Bangkok tried to improve the lot of these workers, who numbered about 35,000. Funds were sent him for this purpose, e.g. from the Malay Relief and Welfare fund (for Malays), from the Indian Red Cross (for Indians), from the Chinese Government (for Chinese). Certain sums, moreover, were taken from the funds of the Conference. Part of the relief funds given by the Siamese people were also used by the delegate to help these Asiatic workers. Throughout this time, the delegate remained in close contact with the Welfare Bureau, directed by Allied officers, which provided these Asiatics with relief and free medical treatment.

The delegate's work did not cease with the coming of the Allied forces. He continued to visit the camps. As most of these Asiatic labourers were British subjects, the British and Indian Red Cross Societies came to their aid ; not being familiar with the special conditions prevailing in the Siamese market, they requested the delegate to make purchases on their behalf, until these workers could be repatriated. A sum of 100,000 rupees received from the Indian Red Cross in November 1945, was used for the benefit of Indian labourers. Moreover, a proportion of the gifts in money and goods contributed by the public and various institutions in Siam was also allocated for this purpose.

5. Delegation in Singapore

The ICRC appointed its representative in Singapore on Jan. 1, 1942. Before the British authorities had time to approve the appointment, the town was taken by the Japanese. Further this agent had not had time to correspond with headquarters in Geneva and was obliged to start work without having received any particular instructions.

As already mentioned, the ICRC tried to secure the recognition of its representative by the Japanese Government. Repeated attempts failed, and it was not until the end of the war that the Japanese Government consented to acknowledge the Committee's representative, whose task, in those conditions, was extremely arduous. In spite of these handicaps, he succeeded in carrying out a considerable piece of work.

When the Japanese occupied Singapore, he started to make daily visits to the Town Hall, where a form of civilian government had been set up by the Japanese authorities. By a happy chance, he met there a former Japanese Consul of his acquaintance, who helped him to get in touch with the authorities. He was, however, informed that the services of a representative of the ICRC were not required, either for PW or civilian internees, and that he would not be allowed to visit the camps.

As soon as Singapore was taken the Committee's representative received information on the conditions in which the civilian population was being assembled in internment camps. He tried to get authority to help these persons, but the Japanese remained obdurate. He was even forbidden, under threats, from continuing the help which he had been giving for some weeks to the representative of the Australian Red Cross. That same representative, however, was still able to purchase some food-stuffs, and was trying to regain possession of large quantities of medical stores that belonged to his Society and which had been confiscated by the Japanese.

The representative of the ICRC, having failed in his persistent efforts, asked for an interview with the General in command ; instead of having a reply, he was taken by the Japanese police three times to the Kempei Tai (police station) and questioned for several hours. The Japanese accused him in particular of spying, and forbade him all contact with PW, internees or their representatives.

The Committee's representative had no means, during the months that followed, of giving official assistance to PW or internees. His attempts to set up a home for aged Europeans, nationals of neutral countries, were systematically opposed by the Japanese authorities. He tried in vain to improve conditions

for the persons who had been shut up in Changi Prison, ordinarily used for 600 Asiatic criminals sentenced to solitary confinement, and now holding over 3,000 men and women. These inmates slept on bare concrete floors and were short of food, so that their state of health was becoming serious.

At the beginning of the war, it was fairly easy to gather information regarding PW and civilian internees in camps from inmates sent to purchase stores for the camps in town, or working under Japanese supervision for the municipal authorities. From information thus received, some private relief could be arranged. In order to avoid any indiscretion which might compromise his activity, the Committee's representative refused to get in direct touch with the organizers of this relief; at the same time, he set up, amid great difficulties, an information service on the needs of the camp, which was effective throughout the whole of the war.

When in touch with Allied nationals released on parole, the Committee's representative succeeded in getting his offer of help laid before the camp commandants. Such action was contrary to the regulations in force, but the Japanese administration was subdivided into so many departments that the suggestion could be followed without the higher authorities becoming aware of the fact.

Until the end of 1942, the Committee's representative received five to ten visitors a day—European neutrals in distress, relatives of PW or internees who required assistance, and others. With the help of Swiss and Chinese friends and the support of the Sultan of Johore, the representative managed to start a fund which enabled him to keep 50 families from want until the end of 1943. This scheme was often frustrated by the Japanese police, who, finally, put a stop to all contact with these unfortunate people.

Eight months after the fall of Singapore, the representative of the Australian Red Cross suggested to the PW Camp Commandant that he should ask the ICRC for a loan of some 50,000 Straits dollars (about 100,000 Swiss francs). The loan was made and then renewed in 1943. The efforts of the representative of the ICRC were rewarded when he was authorized to distribute

gifts to camps and to get in touch by cable with the chief of the Delegation in Tokyo.

The Japanese authorities, for military reasons or through lack of comprehension, frequently thwarted the efforts of the Committee's representative, but this was not the policy of all their nationals. For instance, until the end of the war, a Japanese sergeant undertook without payment to translate telegrams and letters, for the Japanese censor insisted upon the use of the Japanese language. This man visited the representative every week, undeterred by the close watch kept by several detectives. His last friendly gesture was, in August 1945, to approach the Japanese High Command to ask that an interview be given to the representatives of the ICRC and the Protecting Power, in order that arrangements might be made for the release of Allied PW and civilian internees.

Conditions for civilian internees improved soon after the opening of the "Bureau of Control for Enemy Nationals", under the direction of the chief of the Internees Department. This official, who had studied in England and had occupied an important position at the Japanese Embassy in London, organized the Bureau on Western lines and chose civilian internees to work in it. One of these was allowed to visit the Committee's representative and, with the help of his colleague, to make a few purchases. Unfortunately, camp funds were running low, in spite of donations by the public, and an arrangement was finally accepted by the Chief of the Department whereby ICRC relief was distributed to civilian internees, from 1942 to August 1945. The deliveries were at irregular intervals, it is true, as permission was sometimes delayed.

October 10, 1943, was a tragic date for internees in Singapore: Allied submarines entered the port and caused great damage. The Japanese authorities, believing that this was due to sabotage for which internees were responsible, closed the camps to all outside contacts. They questioned and tortured several internees: fifteen of them died. From that time, the representative of the ICRC found it still more difficult to deal with the local authorities, who would only tolerate him in his capacity as "neutral agent". He proceeded therefore as a

private individual, being assured of his status as a neutral.

He took advantage of circumstances to have a useful interpretation placed on the instructions received by the chief of the Department from Tokyo. These instructions specified that the Singapore Internee Department had the right to receive gifts for camps. The Committee's representative caused the orders received in Japanese to be translated by the general term: "Authority for the ICRC to make free gifts"; he was then able to carry on a series of relief schemes over several months, without interference by the Japanese. The representative often had the impression that the Japanese camp management was, at bottom, pleased by his consignments, as the fixed rate they were allowed for camp upkeep soon became insufficient. Supplies were bought with the generous help of two important firms, who delivered the goods at wholesale rates, without charging for insurance and warehousing. Some brokers also helped the ICRC representative, and made certain profits which were justified by the services rendered in procuring supplies which it was impossible to obtain on the regular market.

In January 1945, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, who until then had apparently been unaware of the activities of the Committee's representative, informed him through the Tokyo Delegation that as he had not been recognized by the Japanese Government, he could not receive funds, and that he should immediately cease sending supplies to camps. Four thousand five hundred civilian internees were thus to be deprived of the assistance which he was still able to give. This decision of the Japanese Government would have been the death warrant of hundreds, if the representative had not continued his work, by making surreptitious agreements with certain camp authorities. From this time on, his action was the more admirable as he had no longer even the standing of a neutral agent, the Japanese Government regarding him as *persona non grata*.

The relief supplies to internees amounted to 2,390,000 Straits dollars, and to PW to 117,500 Straits dollars, provided by the British Government and the British Red Cross. The explanation of the comparative smallness of the second figure is that

the representative's appeals to the Japanese military authorities, camp authorities and even the High Military Command invariably met with the same reply : " The prisoners of war are well cared for ; they get their pay and consequently need no assistance whatever ".

The value of the representative's work may be fully appreciated when it is recalled that the only contacts he could achieve on rare occasions with Geneva were by cable, through the Delegations at Tokyo or Bangkok. The reply to his first message took six months to reach him. He was sometimes able to profit by the facilities afforded to the Swiss Consul in Singapore, or he had recourse to a Japanese cable service for the use of Japanese forces for their private or business communications with home.

Contact of the representative in Singapore with other delegations in the Far East was of course extremely difficult. He was ordered to submit all communications received from delegations of the ICRC in the Far East to the police. He complied with this order once or twice, but as the mail was not returned to him he made up his mind in time to disregard this formality. As the representative could get no information and found it so difficult to send cables and mail, he could only reply to the ICRC by indirect means. Many PW were secretly removed either to Siam or other areas, and the detachments which returned to Singapore had greatly diminished numbers. It may be presumed that at the beginning of the war there were 3,200 civilian internees in Singapore, increasing in number to 4,500 in 1945. Whilst the war lasted, it was never possible to ascertain the number of PW, and it was not until after the fighting had ceased that the total was known to be about 90,000. At the time of the capitulation, there remained about 30,000, including 16,000 nationals of the English-speaking countries and 14,000 Indians. No relief could be distributed to the Indian camps, with the exception of some medical stores and spectacles, which the Indian doctor was able to acquire with the discreet help of the representative.

It was only at the moment of the capitulation that the Japanese accorded official recognition to the representative of the ICRC ; that is to say, after three and a half years of ceaseless work at great risk. The delegate at once visited, or sent his agents to visit PW and internee camps. He also organized a relief service and issued thousands of parcels to PW and internees.

From the Japanese capitulation in August 1945 and until the arrival of the Allied troops, he spent 346,500 Straits dollars for PW, 902,000 for civilian internees and 11,000 for detainees' relatives resident in Singapore, numbering about 3,500 adults and 1,500 children. These funds were provided by the British Government and the British Red Cross, and by local subscription ¹.

On the arrival of the Allied troops, Japanese military personnel in Singapore, Malaya and Burma were interned in camps with their own military command, under British control. The Singapore delegation, and the Indian delegation (for Burma) visited the camps to give assistance and relief supplies.

After his first visits to the camps in Burma, the Committee's delegate in British India cabled to Geneva to ask for supplies (toilet requisites, sports equipment, games, musical instruments, newspapers, etc.). Funds for the Japanese were still available in Geneva, and as the YMCA wished to be associated with this particular relief scheme, arrangements were made for joint shipments of these articles to Burma. In the meantime, the YMCA had already issued games and miscellaneous supplies in the camps in Burma. The Japanese Red Cross had also sent large supplies of newspapers, books and magazines.

The repatriation of the men was commenced in the spring of 1947, and was completed by October.

In Malaya, a great number of Japanese prisoners classed as " Surrendered Enemy Personnel " (SEP) were placed in camps. They received no money or tobacco. The delegate of the ICRC visited them and, in the autumn of 1946, secured an allowance of five cigarettes per week for each man ; at the beginning of 1947, the number was raised to twenty. Issues of soap,

¹ See schedule in annex to Vol. III.

toilet requisites, sports equipment, games, wireless sets and newspapers were made, and the British authorities agreed to pay SEP for their work when they came to be repatriated.

6. Delegation in the Philippines

During the war in the Pacific the ICRC, through the agency of its delegation at Tokyo, appointed a representative in Manila. His principal duties were to purchase and distribute relief supplies to PW and civilian internees.

This agent was introduced by the Swiss Consul in Manila to the Chief of External Affairs of the Japanese Military Command, who promised his support, provided that it had the sanction of the Tokyo authorities. The representative was never officially recognized, however, nor given authority to visit CI and PW camps. He tried on several occasions to inspect Santo Tomas Camp, but without success ; on each occasion his request was deferred " to a later date ". In view of these circumstances, he was instructed to do his best, even by private means, to send relief to camps. He again approached the Japanese military authorities, who authorized him to remit, in May 1943, 50,000 pesos (approximately 80,000 Swiss francs) to the Executive Committee of Santo Tomas Camp. On this occasion, he had an interview with the Chairman of the internees' executive committee, and the funds were used for the purchase of medicaments and articles of daily use, and for allowances to internees' families in Manila who were without means of support.

It should be recorded that the Committee's representative in Manila, who was never in direct contact with Geneva, also acted for the Protecting Power and, in this double capacity, he had greater facilities for assisting Allied nationals.

The Protecting Power, Switzerland, supplied the Executive Committee with 47,000 pesos per month, for assistance to internees and their families. In August 1943, the delegate obtained authority to hand the Executive Committee an extra amount of 50,000 pesos. The sum was shared amongst various CI camps, religious communities and hospitals.

When the Japanese decreed the independence of the Philippines, conditions for the internees altered, as the Japanese kept a strict check over communications between the camps and the exterior. Henceforth no step could be taken without their formal consent; they undertook the distribution of relief supplies which arrived on November 7, 1943, by the exchange ship *Teia Maru*, and 7,529 parcels were shared amongst the camps at the beginning of December.

Camps were in urgent need of funds; as the monthly allowances made by the Protecting Power were delayed by the dilatory methods of the Tokyo central administration, the Committee's representative was authorized to make a further advance of 50,000 pesos, paid in two instalments in December 1943 and January 1944. The amounts paid in May and August 1943 provided for the needs of 8,031 Allied nationals, both internees and destitute civilians, comprising 6,362 Americans, 1,462 British, 100 Dutch, 52 Poles, 18 Norwegians and 37 other nationals.

Further changes in the conditions for civilian internees occurred in 1944, when the Japanese War Intelligence Bureau of Investigation took over the administration of camps. The Japanese Ambassador warned the delegate verbally that he must entirely give up camp visiting if he wished to avoid trouble, and the last amount paid over was returned to him. The Japanese authorities opened an enquiry on the delegate's activities and seriously contemplated the reimbursement of the first two amounts paid out by the ICRC, by means of deductions from camp maintenance funds. Such a course would have had the direst consequences for the internees.

In the Philippines, as in all occupied territories in the Southern Pacific, the Japanese authorities forbade the Committee's delegate to help PW

The situation again changed when a YMCA Committee was set up in Manila. The delegate worked with this Committee which not only provided the customary intellectual and moral help afforded by the YMCA, but also undertook the distribution of gifts from neutral or Chinese donors, and of medicaments.

The ICRC made further attempts in August 1944 to send

relief supplies to the Philippines. Its representative visited the Japanese Embassy in company with the Swedish Consul, but could not obtain satisfaction. In November 1944, the Japanese Embassy left Manila. The military authorities then stopped all communications, and only with great difficulty could even small supplies be sent to the camps.

The American forces arrived in the Philippines in February 1945 and liberated Santo Tomas Camp, the only camp with which the Committee's representative had been able to make direct contact.

The representative, then recognized as the official delegate, was requested by the American authorities to work with them in giving relief to the destitute refugees who were arriving in thousands from the districts south of Manila, where the food situation in general was becoming very serious. The delegate set up a distributing centre in his own house, to supply free food and clothing to needy refugees. The supplies were provided by the American Army and the work of distribution went on for over four weeks. Thereafter, the relief work of the delegate was supported by gifts from local people and owed much to the good-will shown by many.

In line with the practice of his Red Cross colleagues in the Far East, the Manila delegate visited the camps for Japanese prisoners captured by the Americans. He was able to establish that the men were being treated in accordance with the terms of the Convention. He distributed a few relief supplies and successfully arranged for PW to correspond with the their families.

7. Dutch East Indies Delegation

The work of the delegations of the ICRC in the Dutch East Indies was carried out in behalf of the nationals of this side or that, according to the turn in military events.

The Netherlands East Indies Government interned German nationals when Holland was invaded by Germany in May 1940, and Italian nationals when Italy joined the conflict. In February 1942, when the country was occupied by the Japanese these

internees were released and Allied nationals interned. In August 1945, after the Japanese defeat, the Allied nationals were liberated and replaced in the camps by Japanese, when the Axis nationals were once again interned. The Indonesian conflict led to the return to concentration camps of a great number of Dutch nationals, who had only just been released and who had not yet recovered from the privations endured during the Japanese occupation.

In 1940, the ICRC had obtained authority from the Dutch authorities to appoint delegates in the East Indies. These representatives first visited internment camps for Germans and Italians, and then those for the Japanese.

When those territories were occupied by the Japanese, the ICRC made every effort to get official recognition for their delegates from the occupying authorities. These attempts as already stated, met with the systematic refusal of the Tokyo Government. The delegates not only lacked official recognition, but were also cut off from Geneva during the war. They could not do any relief work, since it was forbidden in their own region, and the islands of Java, Sumatra and Borneo were cut off from the rest of the world.

Java. — The occupation of Java took place at the end of February, 1942. The delegate at once attempted to get in touch with the Japanese authorities, but it was not until the end of March that he was able to interview the official in charge of external affairs, who informed him that his Government did not recognize any representative of the ICRC in the South Pacific. Another attempt was made a few days later by the representative of the Netherlands East Indies Red Cross, who wished to suggest a relief scheme for wounded and sick military personnel, and the transmission of mail via Geneva. The scheme fell through, this Red Cross Society having been dispersed shortly afterwards by order of the occupying Power.

In spite of persistent attempts, the Committee's representative in Java was never authorized to visit camps, and the Japanese High Command never allowed him to come into

personal contact with PW or civilian internees. Thus frustrated, the delegate tried at least to help relatives and friends who wished to send parcels to PW and civilian internees. The Japanese authorities requested him to make a written application to this effect. The Swedish and Swiss Consulates, who represented the Protecting Powers, managed shortly afterwards to organize a relief service at Soerabaya. As an exceptional favour this scheme was allowed by the Japanese naval authorities, who had a dominant influence in this town. The commandants of the PW and internee camps thus allowed ladies' committees to send parcels weekly to the camps. This scheme was allowed to go on until June 1943, when all communication with camps was forbidden, even those in which there were women and children.

The Committee's representative, having learnt that relief parcels carried by the "exchange ships" had been sent to Singapore for reforwarding to the Dutch East Indies, applied to the Japanese authorities on several occasions for information regarding these consignments. The only reply vouchsafed was that all instructions for the distribution of these supplies had been given direct by Tokyo to the military authorities who took delivery of the parcels.

On several occasions, the delegate tried to improve conditions for PW and internees by suggesting their exchange, or the supply of medicaments, but his efforts always met with flat refusal.

For some time, he was able to maintain a message service between Tokyo and Batavia. In May 1943, the Japanese Secret Police (*Keimpei Tai*) ordered him to "cease all activity".

Sumatra. — A few weeks after the Japanese occupation, the Dutch were interned, the men in the prisons, the women and children in the schools, churches and mission buildings. These civilian internees suffered particularly from inadequate sanitary arrangements and lack of medical attention; their conditions became worse as the war went on and their financial means and food supplies diminished.

The situation for PW was equally pitiable. At the beginning

of the occupation, the Committee's representative, as a doctor and in his personal capacity, was allowed to visit some PW camps, but this authority was withdrawn a few weeks later.

Borneo. — As already recorded, the devotion of the Committee's representative to the humanitarian cause cost him his life. His activities were held by the occupying authorities to be criminal and he fell victim to the suspicious hostility of the military authorities, who were quite incapable of grasping the reasons for his efforts. It is difficult, in the absence of any records, to give a correct account of the extent of Dr. Vischer's help to PW and internees before his execution by order of the naval authorities, in December 1943 (for "plotting against the Japanese Army"), but it may be recalled that his interest in their welfare was one of the principal charges against him by the court-martial which sentenced him to death.

When the Japanese capitulated in *Sumatra*, the delegate of the ICRC made a general tour of the camps. He at once assisted in relief measures by distributing foodstuffs (fruit and vegetables) and funds received from private persons and relief societies. He also gave his services to the central relief organization whose purpose was to co-ordinate these activities. Relief committees were formed which, with the help of the Chinese residents in particular, set about collecting gifts of money and food, and finding and putting in order premises to lodge liberated internees, purchasing food, clothing and medicaments, collecting fruit and vegetables, distributing relief according to requirements, removing PW and internees, organizing canteens to provide from 300 to 600 meals daily and installing hospitals, with doctors and nursing personnel. Unfortunately the political situation rapidly became critical and the work of these committees shrank to such an extent that by the end of October 1945, the Committee's delegation at Medan was the only remaining agency able to continue the supply of relief to several thousand former PW and internees. The necessary funds were supplied by private subscription and by the Netherlands Red Cross.

In *Java*, the delegates of the ICRC (who had at last been officially recognized by the Tokyo Government) supported local relief activities in behalf of former PW and internees who were still in the camps. With this object, they kept in touch with the representatives of the Protecting Powers and the Japanese authorities who had been instructed to keep order until the arrival of the Allied troops. At the end of August, they were able to visit some camps and arrange for the despatch of food and clothing collected locally. There was much confusion ; the Japanese authorities issued " Red Cross " permits to all who applied ; emblems profusely decorated buildings, cars and vehicles. The delegate tried to co-ordinate the offers of voluntary assistance which flowed in from all sides. He received and allocated funds supplied by the Japanese. A number of trucks was placed at his disposal, which he employed to meet the needs of the moment.

* * *

Conflict in the Archipelago. — In the autumn of 1945, the Indonesian Republic was proclaimed ; 35,000 persons, Dutch and Indo-Dutch were interned, and fighting began between Dutch and Indonesians.

The Netherlands Government soon requested the ICRC to intervene. At the end of the year, two delegates were sent from Geneva to Java to set up the headquarters of the Delegation at Batavia. They began by getting in touch with the Dutch and British authorities and the Netherlands Red Cross ; they next approached the Republican authorities and the Indonesian Red Cross organization, which had just been constituted. Early in 1946, the ICRC had secured the agreement of the Republican authorities to the following proposals :

(a) Application of the Geneva Convention to persons detained in camps ;

(b) Lists to be made of all camps in Republican territory, giving all details of camp locations, strengths, etc. ;

(c) Authority for delegates of the ICRC to make a preliminary tour of the camps to last a fortnight ;

(d) Authority for detainees to send Red Cross messages of twenty-five words in Malay, Dutch or English, addressed to their relatives in any country ;

(e) Nominal lists of all internees in Republican hands to be given to the Delegation in Batavia, for transmission to the Netherlands Red Cross, the Dutch East Indies Red Cross and the British Red Cross.

As it had been agreed, the delegates were able during the first half of February 1946 to visit 51 camps for civilian internees and four hospitals in Central and East Java. The camps held 21,000 internees, including 16,000 women and children.

In the course of 1946 and until most of the internees had been removed, that is to say, during the first half of 1947, the Committee's delegates repeatedly visited these camps, as well as others ; many camps were visited on two or three occasions.

In addition to their steps to secure improvements in living conditions and the transmission of requests and complaints from internees, the delegates obtained agreement to certain schemes, in which they had an active part.

Food parcels given by the Netherlands Red Cross were forwarded to the camps by the delegation at Batavia, with the help of the Indonesian Red Cross organization. The same arrangement was made for medicaments. As there were practically no pharmaceutical supplies in the whole of the Republican territory, it was agreed that the Netherlands Red Cross should supply medicaments to the Indonesian Red Cross organization, and that an equivalent in currency should be paid to the internees. This agreement procured funds for the internees and at the same time supplied the Indonesian population with medicaments. The plan had the entire approval of the donors. It may be added that the funds were given by the delegates themselves during their camp visits.

The delegation at Batavia had a large part in the success of negotiations for the removal of internees towards the terri-

tories held by the Dutch. The evacuation started at the end of June 1946 and was completed during the first half of 1947. At the beginning, rapid progress was made with the help of the British authorities, who supplied the means for air transport. In the autumn, however, the removals came to a standstill, and were only resumed after representations made by the delegation at Batavia.

This delegation also reforwarded the internees' heavy mail.

The repatriation of the Indonesians enlisted by the Japanese military authorities for land work, or for road and railroad building, started in the spring of 1946. The first halt was Batavia and, although he had no official instructions, the Committee's delegate made a point of being present when these repatriates arrived in the town. They were given temporary lodging in a transit camp, which had accommodation for several hundreds, and were handed over to the care of the Indonesian Red Cross organization, to be sent on to their various destinations. The transit camp was visited by the delegates, who asked the Netherlands authorities to make improvements in installations, housing, food and clothing for the repatriates.

The delegation in Batavia also looked after Japanese and German military personnel, and German civilians in Allied hands who remained in the Netherlands East Indies after the fighting in the Far East had come to an end. They visited PW and CI camps, distributed relief and took steps to hasten repatriation.

The repatriation of SEP under Dutch control began in the spring of 1947.

8. Delegation in Indo-China

On being informed that PW camps existed in Indo-China, the ICRC attempted, in 1943, to obtain authority to send a delegate to Saigon, but the request was refused by the Japanese authorities.

In March 1945, when the Japanese, displacing the French forces, occupied Indo-China, the ICRC offered its services for the exchange of news with France and for the despatch of relief

supplies. It again pressed for authority to appoint a delegate, but this was once more refused.

The official recognition of the Committee's delegate was only granted when the Japanese capitulated in August 1945. At this time there were two PW camps in Indo-China, which held 4,544 members of the British and Dutch forces. These camps were under the control of the Japanese authorities in Siam and were, in comparison with all other camps in the Far East, reputed to be "not so bad". The camps had received food supplies from the Swiss Consulate during the whole period of the occupation; after the capitulation, this duty was assumed by the delegation of the ICRC. The expenses incurred, amounting to 118,000 piastres (about 75,000 Swiss francs), were borne by the British and Dutch authorities.

Funds subscribed locally allowed for the purchase of articles of which the PW were in great need. The British and Dutch PW left in September 1945, and the French Red Cross took over the relief of the French PW.

In 1946, the sum of 20,000 piastres, given by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, was handed to the sisters of St-Vincent de Paul at Dalat by the ICRC to give help to orphans of the native population.

Conflict in Indo-China. — At the end of 1946, fighting broke out again between the French forces and the Vietnam troops; civilians and military personnel were taken prisoner. Through its delegation in Paris, the ICRC at once approached the French Government and offered its services, which at first were not, however, considered necessary. When the conflict became more severe, the ICRC, in January 1947, instructed its chief delegate for South East Asia to go to Indo-China. Shortly afterwards, the French authorities requested that a delegate should be sent to that country. The delegate arrived in Saigon on January 23, and at Hanoi on January 29.

Contacts were at once made with the French and Vietnam authorities and the Vietnam Red Cross organization.

On February 12, the delegate visited the camp of Hoa-Binh, 60 kilometers south-west of Hanoi, where 171 French nationals

were detained. Medical supplies were provided and milk for the children. The delegate visited ten French military prisoners 30 kilometers south-west of Hanoi. During the delegate's talks with the Vietnam authorities, he asked for the release of certain categories of internees (women, children and aged persons). On February 28, three men, thirteen women and children of French nationality, together with thirteen Indians were set free. In compensation, the delegate secured the agreement of the French authorities to increase the rice rations for Vietnam prisoners.

Whereas communications with the French authorities were fairly easy, the Vietnam authorities could only be reached by radio. Further, every meeting of the Vietnam representatives and the Committee's delegate between the fighting lines had first to be negotiated with each of the parties. As soon as it became known that the ICRC had a representative in Indo-China, many and varied requests came in from Governments and private persons. The Chinese Government, for instance, asked the delegate to consider with the Chinese Consul in Hanoi how to assist Chinese nationals adversely affected by the events. Some religious orders asked the ICRC to look into the situation of missionaries in Tonkin and North Annam.

In March 1947, the delegate asked the ICRC to appoint an assistant, if possible a doctor. The request was granted and the assistant-delegate left at once.

On April 25, the two delegates had a talk between the fighting lines with the general secretary of the Vietnam Red Cross organization, when they discussed at length all questions concerning PW and civilian internees. They made an exchange of mail and handed over 400 kilograms of relief parcels and funds for the French internees, as well as anti-cholera vaccine and DDT powder for the Vietnam Red Cross organization.

After an exchange of telephone messages by wireless, another meeting was arranged for May 7. Individual and collective relief parcels for French internees were handed to the Vietnam Red Cross organization, together with 10,000 vials of anti-cholera vaccine and 100 kilograms of DDT powder for this society's use.

The delegate could not, however, obtain authority to visit the French internees, on the grounds that "camp visiting was at present impossible owing to transport difficulties".

After repeated requests by the delegate, a meeting was arranged in Vietnam territory, 40 kilometers above Hanoi, on the Red River, for the middle of June. In the meantime, the delegate visited Hanoi Prison and various camps for Vietnam PW in French hands; he obtained important improvements in the prisoners' living conditions, and the discharge of some who were under 18 years of age. On June 22, the delegate went to the meeting place; during the talk he urged the importance for both sides of allowing him to visit the internees. He also requested the release of some categories of internees (women, children, sick and aged). He confirmed the request in writing and was promised a reply by radio. During this interview, the delegates handed the Vietnam Red Cross organization 1,200 kilograms of relief supplies in individual and collective parcels (clothing, food, milk for the children, mosquito netting, medicaments and other requirements, intended for French PW and internees, sent by the French Red Cross and private donors). He also exchanged a large amount of mail and handed over 30,000 piastres for the French internees. The Vietnam Red Cross organization received anti-cholera vaccine (12,000 vials) and 300 kilograms of DDT powder from the French Red Cross.

On June 27, the ICRC delegate visited Haiphong Prison and all camps of Vietnam PW in the district. He then went to Saigon and, on July 3, visited the Central Prison. He was also given authority from the French authorities to visit the Poulo-Condore penal settlement. After having organized relief for the Vietnam PW in Saigon, the delegate went on to make enquiries concerning 1,000 persons in Cochinchina of whom nothing had been heard since the events of 1945-1946.

(D). ACTIVITIES IN UNOCCUPIED CHINA

The special Report made by the ICRC on its activities from March 1938 to September 1939 gives an account of its last steps in China before its delegate's mission came to an end, early in 1939, in agreement with the Chinese Red Cross.

Although China had ratified in 1935 the PW Convention of 1929, the Official Information Bureau for which Art. 77 provides had not been set up on Chinese territory. Japan too, as is known, had not ratified the Convention ; for this reason, the agreement could have no force whilst the conflict was limited to these two countries. When the Chungking Government joined the Allies, the internment of German and Italian nationals provoked similar measures in respect of Chinese living in Germany or Italy, both of which countries had ratified the Convention. From that time, the Convention stipulations could and should be applied.

In December 1942, the ICRC sought from the Chinese Government authority to send on a temporary mission to Chungking the chief of its delegation in British India, accompanied by a Swiss citizen resident in India, M. Senn, who could be appointed delegate in China, should a standing delegation be set up in this country.

The Chinese Government's consent reached Geneva in March 1943, and in April the two representatives of the ICRC left Delhi by air for Chungking. The cordial welcome of the Chinese authorities and Red Cross induced the head of the mission to ask for formal assent to the appointment of his colleague. The required authority was given and, in June 1943, this representative took up his residence in Chungking and established the delegation.

The field of activity was vast. Enemy nationals (PW, internees and persons in assigned residence) were scattered over twelve provinces and separated by immense distances. The representatives therefore had to make long journeys across tracts of uninhabited country, by primitive conveyance. Some of these tours, near the Japanese lines or in the neigh-

bourhood of bands of partisans in action in the interior of the country, were not without risk. The unexpected arrival of the representative of the ICRC was always a great comfort to these unfortunate people, who were completely isolated and who had been cut off for months, or even years, from news from the outside world.

The camps could not, over such wide territory, be placed under the control of a single authority. Some were subject to the Central Government, more came under the provincial governments, and others, within the zone of operations, were the responsibility of the military authorities. It was thus impossible to obtain a complete list of camps or nominal rolls of the inmates ; it was also very difficult to get permission to visit the camps.

Prisoners of war. — At the time of release, the PW strength was found to be about 3,000, but the delegate was only able to check about 1,000 in the camps which he had discovered and which he was given leave to visit. The relatively small number of PW taken by each side is explained by the peculiar features of the war in China. It was guerrilla warfare without any clearly defined front ; small-scale skirmishes at widely scattered points or confined to certain districts led to combatants being captured singly or in small groups.

The camps, known as "Captive Concentration Camps", were scattered over several provinces and held officers (including a few airmen), Japanese army and merchant navy personnel, Koreans, Siamese and a few civilians (men, women and children). In one camp in North China, the delegate found Russian PW and a few Americans, whose capture dated back to the first years of the war between China and Japan. He at once made a direct appeal to the Central Government for their release, but without success. He sometimes had difficulty in obtaining from camp commandants the information he required.

The delegate also had to approach the authorities regarding PW rations, which had been fixed on the basis of a certain sum of money per head. The rations varied in quantity and quality with the fluctuations of the money market, so that the amount

of food given to PW became gradually less as the value of the Chungking dollar fell. After prolonged negotiations, the rations were based on weight. The delegate did not, however, succeed in getting free postage for PW.

On several occasions, the Chungking delegation served as a channel for the Chinese Government's complaints regarding the treatment of Chinese PW in Japanese hands, particularly in Indo-China. The complaints were conveyed by Geneva to the Japanese Government, and the replies were sent by the same means. As already stated, however, delegates were never allowed to visit Asiatic PW in Japanese hands.

Civilian internees. — The great majority of the 300 civilian internees (War localized) with whom the delegate was in contact were Catholic and Protestant missionaries ; they were nationals of countries at war with China and belonged to Missions whose headquarters were in occupied China. The ministers of religion who served parts of the country which had become military zones, had been sent to the rear and assembled in isolated places. British and American missionaries were free to move, the Germans and Italians were kept under watch and were not allowed beyond a two-mile limit. All, without distinction had to provide for themselves. The delegate took particular care of these missionary groups and made them allowances. Several were in the Honan province, where there was famine ; the delegate tried to get consent for their release, or at least to have them transferred to a more suitable region where they could obtain food. It was due to his efforts that the missionaries were allowed to return to the Mission Houses to which they belonged ; some decided to remain, however, and to endure the hardships. The delegate made further efforts later for the nuns to be finally released.

Over 500 enemy aliens, who were at liberty on parole, sought the delegate's help. Among them, the Japanese, German and Italians found themselves without a Protecting Power.

There was a large number of refugees, displaced persons, stray children, aged persons without support and, in particular, victims of famine and flood. As the ICRC had no funds to assist

them, the delegate tried to meet the most urgent needs with the help of the American and British Red Cross Societies, with whose representatives he was constantly in touch.

Civilian Messages. — One of the delegate's first cares in arriving at Chungking had been to organize, together with the Chinese Red Cross, a civilian message service, by message forms or cable. Civilian internees, who up to that time had been without news of their families and who could not correspond with them, at once took advantage of this service. This form of help was a great boon to those who had been cut off for years from the outside world, particularly the missionaries who could no longer correspond with their superiors. The same applied to civilians, both Chinese and aliens, who made regular use of this means of communication. The number of messages sent during the 34 months of M. Senn's mission amounted to 2,900 and the messages received to 6,200.

With regard to the forwarding of these messages, it should be noted that the mail service worked regularly in both directions between certain provinces of free China and occupied China. That is the only known instance where, in a country at war and partially occupied by the enemy, postal communications continued between free and occupied territories.

The delegations at Chungking and at Shanghai took advantage of this fact to exchange messages intended for the one zone or the other without having to make the long circuits by way of Geneva or Cairo.

When the war came to an end, the exchange of messages with the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada showed a marked increase.

Enquiries. — In addition to messages, the presence of a delegate in free China made possible response to many individual requests for information by setting on foot enquiries, either by Chungking or by Geneva.

Relief. — The delegation in Chungking gave valuable service in forwarding relief between free China and the territories

occupied by the Japanese. Next of kin could thus give financial help to relatives living in these regions ; the delegation arranged transfers of money by cabling to Geneva for notification to the delegations at Shanghai or Hong-Kong. All these transfers were made in American dollars. It was by this means alone that the missionaries interned in free China and cut off from their headquarters in occupied China could receive means to live.

The strict currency regulations in force, however, hampered the delegation's work for aliens living in free China who wished to receive funds from Europe or America.

Repatriation. — The ICRC handed to the Chinese Government, as it did to other governments, its memorandum of January 15, 1944, concerning the repatriation of wounded and sick prisoners of war. In May 1945, the Chinese Government accepted the proposals of the ICRC. The fact was brought to the knowledge of the Japanese Government who stated, at the end of July 1945, that it could not accept a proposal in this sense.

From April 1945, the work of the delegate at Chungking greatly increased on account of the many problems raised by the release of Korean PW, and of civilian internees. Stateless persons and civilians without a Protecting Power called on his help, and the very great areas involved made his new duties still more arduous. On this account, the ICRC decided, in August 1945, to increase the China delegation by sending out a second delegate, a doctor. The development in the war situation led to a decline in the calls on the customary services of the ICRC and the despatch of the second delegate became superfluous. The Japanese capitulation had the effect of restoring to the Chinese Government the control of the territories formerly occupied by the Japanese, and the repatriation of PW was being completed.

At the end of 1945, the ICRC closed the delegation at Chungking and entrusted its work for the whole of China to its delegation at Shanghai.

XIII. Prisoners whose right to Protection under the Convention was in dispute

The work of the Committee covered not only those whose right to protection under the Convention was undisputed, but also PW whom circumstances, it appeared, excluded from benefits deriving from its application. The Committee, as it said in its memorandum of August 17, 1944, held " that the fundamental principles of international law and of human rights should also be applied when, in the course of a war, situations arise which are not explicitly mentioned in the international Conventions ".

The main categories of these prisoners in whose behalf the ICRC intervened were :—

" *Partisans* ", by which is meant all combatants to whom the adversary does not recognize the status of belligerents ;

Italian Military Internees (IMI), i.e. members of the Italian army disarmed by the German forces and interned in Germany after the conclusion of the armistice between the Italian Government and the Allied Powers in 1943 ;

" *Surrendered Enemy Personnel* " (SEP), consisting of members of the German and Japanese armed forces captured at the close of hostilities to whom, in 1945, the British and United States authorities assigned a status distinct from that of prisoners of war ;

Prisoners of war transferred by a Detaining Power to one of its allies ;

Prisoners of war ' transformed ' :

(a) into civilian workers,

(b) into political detainees ;

Merchant seamen.

A. PARTISANS ¹

1. General Remarks

The opening years of the War witnessed immense changes in the political system of Europe. Many countries were occupied, armistices were concluded and alliances reversed. Some Governments ceased to be ; others went into exile and yet others were brought to birth. Hence arose an abnormal and chaotic situation in which relations under international law became inextricably confused. In consequence, national groups continued to take an effective part in hostilities, although not recognised as belligerents by their enemies, and members of such groups, fighting in more or less disciplined formations in occupied territory or outside their own country, were denied the status of combatants, regarded as " franc-tireurs " and subjected to repressive measures on grounds of internal security.

This disquieting situation at once engaged the closest attention of the ICRC and inspired it to unremitting efforts to secure for " Partisans " captured by their adversaries the benefits of treatment as Prisoners of War under the Conventions, provided of course that they themselves had conformed to the conditions laid down in Art. I of the Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of 1907 ².

The decided attitude adopted by the ICRC in this respect is entirely in accordance with the traditional spirit of the Red

¹ The term " Partisans " will be used as exclusively applicable to all combatants to whom their adversaries refuse to recognise belligerent status.

² The Article reads as follows :

" The laws, rights, and duties of war apply not only to armies, but also to militia and volunteer corps fulfilling the following conditions :

1. To be commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates ;
2. To have a fixed distinctive emblem recognisable at a distance ;
3. To carry arms openly ; and
4. To conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war."

Cross. The Red Cross is concerned not with the individual interests of States, but with those of men and women who are victims of war and whose lot should not be dependent on juridical considerations by such States respecting the nature of the struggle in which they are involved. The International Committee have accordingly always endeavoured to secure respect for the humanitarian Conventions and the principles they embody, in all circumstances resembling, whether closely or remotely, the conditions of international war. We have particularly in mind here a state of civil war and, in fact, all conditions in which help is needed by victims of armed conflicts.

Apart from various applications made to authorities, of which account will be given hereafter, the ICRC, having regard to the fact that partisan movements were spreading into an ever-growing number of European countries, addressed on August 17, 1944, the following Memorandum to all belligerent States :

“ Certain aspects of the present struggle have induced the International Committee to envisage the consequences of acts of war committed by or against combatant formations whom their adversaries have not recognised as belligerents, but regard as partisans. The Committee are of opinion that, when in the course of war, situations arise analogous to those of war, but not explicitly covered by International Conventions, the fundamental principles of international law and of humanity should nevertheless be regarded as applicable.

“ The International Committee have always devoted especial attention to the treatment of Prisoners of War, and are of opinion that all combatants, without regard to the authority to whom they belong, should enjoy the benefit of the provisions applicable to Prisoners of War, if they fall into enemy hands. But this benefit must be conditional on conformity on their part to the laws and usages of war, especially the following :

- (1) They must be commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates ;
- (2) They must carry a distinctive badge, and
- (3) They must bear arms openly.

“ The International Committee also attach especial importance to securing universal respect for the principles of the Geneva Convention for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded in Armies in the field, and to enabling auxiliary Red Cross organisations to discharge their functions for the benefit of all sick and wounded alike, without discrimination.

"The International Committee are of opinion that the principles stated must be applied, irrespective of all juridical arguments as to the recognition of the belligerent status of the authority to whom the combatants concerned belong.

"In view of the situation hereinafter described, the International Committee, as always when armed forces are in conflict, are ready to serve as impartial intermediaries. In particular, they are ready to forward distinctive badges and notify the wearing of such emblems by combatants not in uniform, as soon as it receives such information from either party for communication to the other."

In lieu of an official reply, the German Government, through representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave a verbal assurance that it would henceforward in principle treat as prisoners of war all partisans bearing arms openly and who might fall into its power. The ICRC was further led to understand that this decision was not unconnected with its efforts, especially those on behalf of the Warsaw partisans. Nevertheless, the German Government was not able to make any official declaration on this subject.

The Belgian, French, Italian, Norwegian and Yugoslav Governments, as well as those of Czechoslovakia and Poland, supported the Committee's views and gave affirmative replies. The Slovak Government did the same, with the certain reservations ¹.

The Government of the United States placed on record the "generous offer" of the International Committee to undertake the role of impartial intermediary between opposing forces, with a view to securing for partisans recognition as regular combatants.

The British Government replied through its Consulate at Geneva on September 27, 1944, that it fully appreciated the "humanitarian considerations" which had prompted the Committee's Memorandum. No final decision on the subject had as yet been reached, but examination of the Committee's suggestions had disclosed "considerable practical difficulties" in the way of their acceptance.

¹ See p. 524 below.

The Belgian and Yugoslav Governments requested the Committee to forward to the opposite party the badges carried by their partisans. It may be added that the Committee had already undertaken a similar office in respect of Italian and French partisans and the badges carried by them.

In view of the highly complex and disquieting nature of the partisan problem, about which the Powers were far from any general agreement, the ICRC can do no more than express the hope that a Diplomatic Conference will soon go thoroughly into the matter and reach a solution inspired by the broadest sentiments of humanity.

2. Particular Steps and Representations

(a) *French Partisans.* — The first case to engage the Committee's close attention was that of the French Forces, followers of General de Gaulle, who side by side with Allied troops pursued their resistance against Axis forces after the Franco-German and Franco-Italian armistices of 1940.

Both of these agreements stipulated that French nationals who continued to bear arms against Germany and Italy should be regarded as "francs-tireurs" and should not enjoy the protection of the laws of war.

The Committee's delegates in Germany and Italy were instructed to pay particular attention to this question, and were soon able to report to Geneva that French partisans, fighting in British uniform, when captured, were given the benefit of the same treatment as British prisoners of war.

The question became peculiarly urgent when whole units, clad in French uniform, took part in military operations in North Africa and left prisoners in the hands of German and Italian forces. After the fighting round Bir-Hakeim in 1942, the German and Italian press published most alarming articles on the subject of the treatment reserved for such prisoners. In point of fact, however, it was later ascertained that those prisoners taken at Bir-Hakeim, who had been told that they would be shot out of hand, did in fact expect to be executed during several days.

The ICRC immediately made urgent representations, especially by a verbal note delivered to the German and Italian Consulates at Geneva, with a view to securing assent to their arguments. They demanded that soldiers fighting under the orders of General de Gaulle and wearing French uniform should receive the same treatment as their fellow-countrymen fighting in British uniform. The Committee expressed their apprehension that if extreme measures were taken in dealing with these men, grave consequences affecting the treatment of prisoners of war generally might ensue, and might even endanger the application in its entirety of the Convention of 1929.

In reply to these two notes, the German and Italian Governments informed the Committee verbally that they would not apply to these French combatants the provisions of the armistices, but that these men would be treated as prisoners of war. As a matter of fact, the partisans of General de Gaulle taken at Bir-Hakeim were detained in separate camps and enjoyed the régime of prisoners of war.

It may be added that, with effect from August 1, 1941, the Committee had entered into direct relations with General de Gaulle and had requested him, on condition of reciprocity, to apply the Geneva Conventions to prisoners of war and civilian internees in the hands of the French Forces. General de Gaulle, by a letter dated November 19, 1941, informed the Committee that the Free French authorities regarded themselves as bound by the Geneva Conventions.

As from June 6, 1944, the time when Allied Armies landed in France, the Committee had also to consider the treatment of French partisans who had engaged in hostilities against German forces in occupied France.

By telegram dated June 15, 1944, the French Provisional Government, then at Algiers, requested the Committee to convey to the German Government a strong protest against the terms of a declaration made by the Supreme Commander of the German Armies in Western Europe and broadcast on the Paris radio on June 11, 1944. According to this declaration, "persons taking part in movements of rebellion directed against the

rear of the forces of the occupying Power, have no right whatever to the protection which may be claimed by regular combatants . . . It is laid down in Article 10 of the Franco-German armistice that French nationals continuing to resist German forces after the conclusion of that agreement, will be treated by German troops as "francs-tireurs" . . . Such rebels will not be regarded as prisoners of war, but executed in accordance with martial law."

The Provisional Government was of opinion that "the German Government could not invoke the terms of a pseudo-armistice, which could not be accepted as having any international validity and is contrary to the provisions of the Hague Convention ratified by Germany herself."

The Provisional Government further made it known that the French Forces of the Interior, comprising all combatant units taking part in the struggle against the enemy, formed part of the French Army and enjoyed the benefit of all rights and privileges accorded to combatants by the laws in force. These forces conformed to the general conditions laid down in the Regulations annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of October 19, 1907.

The Provisional Government warned the Government of the Reich that, if the threats contained in the declaration broadcast by Radio Paris were given effect, it would be obliged in return to take with regard to German prisoners of war all measures rendered necessary by the initiative of the Supreme Commander of the German Armies in Western Europe.

The ICRC transmitted this message *totidem verbis* to the German Government, and of its own motion drew the attention of that Government to the vital importance, from the humanitarian point of view, of securing to all combatants taken prisoner by the enemy the benefit of the rules applicable to prisoners of war, even in cases not provided for by existing Conventions.

The ICRC also invited the attention of the German Government and of all Governments concerned, to Sec. 3 of Art. 2 of the Convention of July 27, 1929, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, in which it is laid down that the latter are not be made the subject of reprisals.

In July 31, 1944, the Government of the Reich, through the German Consul-General at Geneva, gave the Committee a verbal reply to their telegram of June 16. Here is the record made by the ICRC on this occasion :

“ The Government of the Reich states that it has no knowledge of the existence of any Provisional Government at Algiers. Consequently, the Government of the Reich, without comment on the matter and the manner of M. Massigli's dispatch, cannot accept transmission of any such message, and expresses its profound surprise that the Committee should have thought itself empowered to forward a dispatch from any such quarter.

“ The Government of the Reich accordingly considers this communication as null and void. As for the treatment accorded to captured insurgents, it will be that contemplated by the Supreme Commander on the Western Front.”

A few days later the FFI¹ in the Haute-Savoie encircled and occupied Annecy and there captured some 3,000 members of the Wehrmacht. The Commandant of the FFI in the Haute-Savoie stated publicly that he would apply the Convention to these prisoners, in conformity with the promise he had made them in the armistice convention signed with the German colonel. The ICRC learnt of this in the press and considered that if they could visit the German prisoners and state in reports sent to the Reich authorities that the Convention was indeed applied, their endeavours to obtain recognition of PW status of captured FFI would be facilitated. Not wishing, however, to contact the Haute-Savoie FFI without the consent of the Algiers Government, the ICRC laid its idea before the representative of this Government at Geneva, who not only approved the plan but also gave instructions for the French authorities in Annecy.

Meanwhile, the Germans had shot 80 French political hostages in the Montluc prison at Lyons, and the French authorities in Annecy therefore decided to shoot in reprisal 80 German prisoners in their hands.

Following on steps by the ICRC at Annecy and in Geneva, when they laid stress upon the consequences, immediate and remote, affecting large numbers of PW, that would be likely to ensue from such reprisals, the FFI Command consented to

¹ FFI = Forces françaises de l'intérieur.

postpone the execution for several days, to enable the ICRC to make urgent representations in Berlin. The aim of these steps was to secure an undertaking from the German Government not to proceed with the execution of French civilian internees and further to ensure for all French partisans captured the benefit of PW treatment. The German prisoners in FFI hands in Haute-Savoie were, moreover, visited by ICRC delegates, and favourable reports were sent to Berlin, as also the distinctive badge worn by the FFI. Six days having elapsed without the German Government having replied, the eighty German prisoners were executed.

The ICRC nevertheless decided to continue their endeavours to secure PW treatment for captured partisans and instructed their representatives in Berlin to make enquiry as to the fate of French combatants reported as "missing, believed to be prisoners in Germany". Nominal rolls of these men had been communicated to Geneva by representatives of the French Resistance Movement.

The German authorities expressed their willingness to give information with regard to partisans believed to be prisoners, provided that details (name in full, date of birth and circumstances of capture) could be given.

A first attempt yielded encouraging results and the Committee was shortly able to communicate to the Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees in Paris a provisional list, which had been received from the German authorities, of F.F.I. detainees in a camp in Germany.

To enable them to make further enquiry in Berlin, the ICRC requested the said Ministry to furnish nominal rolls of F.F.I. members believed to be prisoners in Germany, who had acted as combatants in conformity with the provisions of the Hague Convention of 1907.

The status of such prisoners being still undecided, the Committee continued its efforts in their behalf, and by repeated representations, succeeded in securing from the German authorities not indeed a formal undertaking, but at any rate a verbal assurance that members of the F.F.I. taken by the Germans would be treated as prisoners of war.

Accordingly on March 23, 1945, the ICRC was able to reply to an enquiry from the Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees with regard to conditions in German camps, where combatants and medical staff of the F.F.I. were detained. In its reply the ICRC reviewed the position and emphasised its efforts to secure a formal declaration from the German authorities, which the latter had consistently declined to provide.

(b) *Slovak Partisans*. — After the Slovak rising of August 1944, large numbers of partisans were made prisoner.

On August 17, 1944, the ICRC conveyed to the Slovak Government its Memorandum containing a statement of the principles which, in its opinion, should be held to determine the position of combatant formation not recognised by their opponents as belligerents and regarded as "partisans" ¹.

To this note, the Slovak Government replied that, though not formally a party to the Hague Convention of 1907, it was prepared to accept the conditions laid down in Article I of the Regulations annexed to that Convention. At the same time, it made certain reservations with regard to "distinctive badges" (*signe distinctif*). This expression the Slovak Government understood to mean enemy uniform, even though incomplete. It did not understand the term as covering Slovak uniform worn with parts of foreign uniform or foreign badges of rank, instead of those adopted by the Slovak Republic.

The ICRC was informed by its delegate at Bratislava, by report dated November 1, 1944, that insurgents wearing Slovak uniform were liable to be court-martialled, but that President Tiso, holding that they had been suborned from their duty, had stated that they would be mercifully treated; insurgents wearing German uniform, on the other hand, were liable to immediate execution.

According to this report, the Slovak Red Cross was not allowed to intervene on behalf of insurgents, who were left to depend solely on the German authorities. On enquiry of these authorities as to the fate of these insurgents, the Committee's repre-

¹ See above, p. 517.

sentatives were informed that Slovak prisoners of war remained only the shortest possible time in screening camps in Slovakia and were then sent to Reich territory. While being screened and transferred, they could not be visited by delegates of the ICRC, but on reaching Germany they would, like others, pass into the sphere of activity of the Red Cross representatives in Berlin.

On November 7, 1944, the Committee was apprised by its London representative of a complaint by the Czechoslovak Red Cross in Great Britain, to the effect that Slovak partisans captured during the rising were being subjected to inhuman treatment ¹.

The Committee at once directed its London delegate to ascertain from the Czechoslovak Government in Great Britain what army these partisans belonged to, where that army was in being and what uniform and badges they wore—without which information the Committee could not intervene in their behalf with the Slovak and German authorities.

The Committee's delegate at Bratislava then reported, on January 6, 1945, that 380 Slovak partisans had been removed to Prison Camp No. XVII at Kaisersteinbruch, near Vienna. He added a list of these men, obtained from underground sources, and complaints as to the inadequacy of their rations.

This delegate had approached the German authorities in Slovakia with a request that these detainees might be permitted to receive food parcels. Assent having been given to this proposition, the ICRC attempted to get it ratified by the Reich authorities in Berlin. The Red Cross delegate also intervened in behalf of American and British airmen undergoing imprisonment as "members of the Anglo-American Air Staff in liaison with the partisans", and secured an undertaking that they would be transferred to prisoner of war camps.

On January 19, 1945, the Committee's delegates in Berlin pressed once more their demand for information as to the position of Slovaks interned in Germany and expressed the

¹ The situation in Slovakia was complicated by the fact that there was a Slovak Government in Slovakia and a Czechoslovak Government in London, recognised by the Allied Powers.

desire that they should be treated as prisoners of war and given the benefit of the Convention of 1929.

On February 15, 1945, the standing representative of the Czechoslovak Government with the League of Nations informed the Committee that the Slovak partisans interned in the Camp at Kaisersteinbruch had been transferred thence to the camp at Altenburg in Thuringia, where "they were to be subjected to the same régime as Russian prisoners, that is to say, they would have to suffer the same disadvantages as the latter". He requested that a delegate of the ICRC should visit Altenburg Camp. The Committee at once instructed its Berlin representatives to secure information as to the treatment of Slovak partisans in German camps, and furnished them with the approximate number of Slovak prisoners of war and internees in Germany, together with a list of the camps in which they were believed to be. These lists had been compiled partly from information given by the next of kin and transmitted by the Committee's representative at Bratislava, who had found means to supplement them with details gathered from various sources. The delegate added that, in the light of his information derived from the Slovak Ministry of National Defence, a distinction should properly be drawn between :

(1) *Slovak Military Internees*, i.e. Slovaks who had fought with the German Army and had been interned after the rising of the autumn of 1944. Some of these men were already back in Slovakia ; others had been merged in auxiliary formations attached to the German Army.

(2) *Insurgents (partisans)* captured in Slovakia and transferred to Germany.

The ICRC at the same time requested its delegates to obtain all possible information as to the category to which Slovaks found by them in the camps belonged, with a view to the dispatch of relief supplies.

Meanwhile, the delegate at Bratislava took advantage of the fact that the Allied authorities permitted visits to transit camps, and strongly urged the German High Command in Slovakia to

give similar permission for visits to partisans in transit camps in that area.

He requested that so-called "capture cards" relating to insurgent Allied combatants in German hands should from time to time be forwarded to him, and that every facility be given for the transmission of parcels sent by the Slovak Red Cross to Slovak prisoners and internees in Germany.

The last request received a favourable reply from the Chief of the German General Staff, but military developments in the spring of 1945 prevented any practical results.

(c) *Yugoslav Partisans*. — In August 1943, the ICRC was informed that Yugoslav partisans had fallen into the hands of German troops and had been interned in the Reich. They thereupon opened negotiations by enquiring of the Government of the Reich how these men would be treated. The German High Command replied on October 18, 1943, that Yugoslav partisans would be treated "as prisoners of war", but did not make it clear that these men would in all respects have the status of prisoners of war and enjoy the benefit of the Convention of 1929. In the beginning of August 1943, an order was issued by the German High Command that prisoners taken in the course of military operations in Croatian territory by the forces in occupation, were to be transferred to Germany, where they would not be treated as "francs-tireurs", but would have their lives spared. It proved impossible, however, to check this statement, and the Committee's attempts remained ineffective, because its delegates were refused permission to visit these men.

In the spring of 1944, the ICRC, through its delegates in Berlin, asked the German High Command what practical effect had been given to their decision on the question of principle. The High Command replied that Germany was no longer at war with Yugoslavia and that the treatment of partisans taken in the course of police operations was consequently entirely a matter for the German Police. These partisans were for the most part detained in camps occupying a position midway between concentration camps and civilian internee camps, access to which by the Committee's delegates was refused.

At this same period, the Committee instructed its delegates at Zagreb to endeavour to open communications with the Yugoslav Forces of Liberation. Contact was made, and in September 1943 the command of these Forces intimated its readiness to receive the Committee's proposals. In November 1943 the Committee's representatives at Zagreb communicated to the Free Force Command certain proposals whose acceptance, on condition of reciprocity, would tend to facilitate similar demands already submitted in behalf of Yugoslav prisoners of war. These proposals turned upon eight points, as follows :

- (1) General application of the Geneva Conventions of 1929.
- (2) Extension by analogy to Civilian Internees of the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1929 relative to Prisoners of War.
- (3) Dispatch of a permanent delegate of the ICRC to the headquarters of the Yugoslav Liberation Movement, with the right to visit prisoner of war camps.
- (4) Permission to undertake enquiries and search in territories occupied by the Forces of the Liberation Movement relative to members of forces and civilians, and to introduce the so-called " Civilian Messages " in the same territories.
- (5) Communication to the ICRC of nominal rolls of Prisoners of War.
- (6) Communication to the ICRC of information with regard to cases of death and health conditions among prisoners, their transfer to other camps, etc.
- (7) Permission for the regular delivery to Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of relief in money or in kind.
- (8) Permission for relief work amongst the civil population, especially women and children, suffering from the effects of war in territories set free by the Forces of the Movement.

When submitting these proposals the Committee's delegates at Zagreb handed the Free Force Command two copies of the Convention of 1929 in French and Serbo-Croatian, and urged

them to make direct contact with the Committee by any available means.

Acting on this suggestion, Free Force Command in January, 1944, informed the ICRC of its readiness to study the application of the Geneva Convention, on condition of reciprocity, and requested the dispatch to its headquarters of a Red Cross representative.

The ICRC at once sent a delegate on a mission to Italy, and at Bari on May 13, 1944, this representative had an interview with Colonels Nikolich and Mestrovich. At this interview the Committee's representative did not fail once again to lay stress on the importance of being able to assure the German Authorities that German soldiers captured by the Free Forces were being treated as prisoners of war. It seemed indeed likely that, if the ICRC had been able to give Berlin some detailed information about these prisoners and to produce an undertaking from Free Force Command to recognise the right of the Committee's representatives to visit prisoner of war camps and send relief to the inmates, the Committee would have had less difficulty in securing from the German Authorities similar treatment for Yugoslav prisoners in their hands. Unfortunately, however, Free Force Command could not be induced to clarify its own position with regard to these questions.

Nevertheless, the ICRC did not let the matter rest, and very shortly, early in 1944, through its delegates in Berlin put before the German Authorities a fresh request for permission to visit all Yugoslav partisans, without distinction, whether captured by the Wehrmacht or by police. This time, the German High Command replied that the matter would be considered and submitted to the German Foreign Office.

This seemed to afford some ground for hope, and the Committee forthwith renewed its approach in that quarter. Unfortunately, the reply received was to the effect that the High Command had raised unfounded hopes, since the German Government did not recognise the Governments to which these Yugoslav partisans belonged. Consequently, no attempt at intervention by the Committee in their behalf could succeed.

It was at this time that the ICRC despatched to all belligerent

Governments its Memorandum of August 17, 1944, inviting them, in view of the fundamental principles of international law and the dictates of humanity, to grant to all combatants in their hands the status of prisoners of war, no matter what authority they were serving under, in so far as they themselves had conformed to the laws and usages of war ¹.

On August 25, 1944, the Committee received from the German High Command a second declaration, similar to that of October 18, 1943, and stating that partisans taken prisoner in the Balkans were being treated as "prisoners of war", without making it any clearer whether they enjoyed the benefit of the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1929, or not.

On the strength of this assurance the Committee's chief delegate requested the German High Command to allow the Committee to ascertain what treatment these partisans were receiving, that is to say, to visit the camps where they were detained. On September 2, the High Command explained that its declaration had been misinterpreted ; it must be understood that the Committee's delegates could only be allowed to visit those partisans who had already been classed with prisoners of war. Thus one week after making this declaration, the German Authorities in effect went back on their own decision, for the last pronouncement practically cancelled the first.

It should be explained that combatants belonging to the Yugoslav Free Forces had for the most part, at the beginning of hostilities, been placed in Yugoslav prisoner of war camps and had till then always been visited and helped by the Committee's delegates in exactly the same way as prisoners of war belonging to the old Yugoslav army, taken in 1941, no distinction being drawn between them.

Besides the Yugoslav PW camps in Germany, the Committee's delegates also visited similar camps in Norway, where partisans were detained.

These men had been taken to the extreme north of Norway to the region known as the "tundra", and there placed in the custody of the German police, who made them over to the

¹ See above, p. 517.

Norwegian State police. Concerned by the unhappy situation of these men, who were beyond the reach of all usual means of control and were suffering severely from the arctic climate, the Committee made representations in Berlin, where the German High Command seemed surprised to learn of their existence, and secured their transfer to the south of the country. Here they were put under the authority of the High Command and treated as prisoners of war. The change of climate and of regimen saved the lives of many of these unhappy people, numbers of whom had died of consumption. A hospital was opened in the centre of Norway for the care of the sick, and at long last, after prolonged efforts and much delay, delegates of the Committee were, in the spring of 1943, for the first time allowed to visit these camps. If they were not able to visit all—some labour detachments employed in islands considered as within the sphere of operations being excluded from the permission—the Red Cross representatives were at any rate able to satisfy themselves that the Yugoslav partisans in Norway were being treated as prisoners of war. Thus, despite difficulties of distance and transport, about 1700 Yugoslavs in the hands of the German Army in Norway could be relieved by the Committee, in the same way as Yugoslav prisoners in Germany. From the beginning of 1944 they received standard American Red Cross parcels and clothing, of which they were in great need. The ICRC also conveyed to them the gifts of the Yugoslav Relief Committee in Cairo.

The ICRC meanwhile never lost interest in these Yugoslav partisans. In January 1945, the Yugoslav Military Mission established in Great Britain, in answer to a request made on August 17, 1944, at length informed them regarding the distinctive badges worn by Yugoslav Free Force combatants. This information was at once passed on to the German Government, who were reminded of the Committee's previous attempts to secure for all Free Force combatants recognition of their status as prisoners of war.

The conclusion of hostilities put an end to these prolonged negotiations, steadily pursued by the Committee, but unfortunately without any definite decision in favour of the

Yugoslav partisans held in Germany, in camps other than PW camps. The efforts of the Committee and of its delegates in Berlin were consistently reinforced by similar steps by the delegates in Belgrade and Zagreb.

Early in 1943, the ICRC had established its representatives in Zagreb. From that time up to the spring of 1945, all attempts on their part to intervene with the local civil and military authorities in behalf of war victims, especially partisan prisoners and their next of kin, encountered lively opposition. Such was the state of feeling that even certain welfare activities could not be undertaken by the Committee's delegates without some personal risk. Nevertheless, they found means to use part of the medical stores given for the benefit of sick and wounded partisans (anti-typhoid vaccines, etc.) and a relief service was organised, especially in Croatia, which operated without distinction of race, creed or nationality for the benefit of civilians, especially children, of whom there were large numbers in the partisan camps.

If the efforts of the ICRC and their delegates did not achieve more definite results in favour of partisan prisoners and the recognition of their status, they did, however, in some cases succeed in securing improvements in their living conditions. The Committee's delegates were able to use for the benefit of these men part at least of the gifts provided by National Red Cross Societies and other institutions in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Thus, though the ICRC delegate could not visit the concentration camp of Zemun, he was nevertheless able, with the co-operation of the Serbian Red Cross, to send foodstuffs supplied by the Swiss Red Cross to women and children detained there as partisans.

(d) *Italian Partisans*. — In December 1943, the Italian Government notified the ICRC of the distinctive badges worn by partisans of the Italian Resistance Movement, and asked that this information should be conveyed to the German Authorities and action taken to secure for those concerned the benefit of the provisions of international law.

In January 1944, the Committee acted on this request, and

at the same time laid stress on the importance attached by them to securing for all combatants captured by their opponents the advantage of treatment as PW, irrespective of their military status. The Committee also reminded the German Authorities of their earlier representations in this sense, which had been made on October 27, 1943, through the Italian and German Consulates at Geneva. In spite of repeated reminders, this communication remained unanswered.

In June, 1944, press reports stated that leaflets had been scattered from the air in Northern Italy. These leaflets were signed by the Commander of the German Forces and enjoined all partisans to lay down their arms, on pain of immediate execution in case of capture. The Committee asked the German Government whether these reports were correct. At the same time it took occasion to re-state its position with regard to the question of principle governing the treatment of partisans. To this communication also no reply was ever received.

No decision in the sense desired was ever made, in spite of all efforts to secure for these men treatment as prisoners of war.

(e) *Polish Partisans.*— On October 3, 1944, the representative of the Polish Red Cross at Geneva informed the ICRC of a declaration made by the German Authorities—a declaration which was certainly prompted by the various steps taken by the Committee—that members of the Polish underground forces would be treated as prisoners of war. In reliance on these declarations the Committee's delegates in Berlin, after the Warsaw rising, requested that Polish prisoners be given the benefit of the Convention of 1929, and that nominal rolls of such prisoners be duly submitted with a view to the dispatch of relief supplies offered by the Polish Red Cross in London. According to the terms of the instrument of surrender executed at Warsaw, the German Authorities did grant Polish partisans taken since the beginning of the outbreak treatment according to the Convention of 1929. Men with falsified identity discs were no less recognised as PW, but were required to declare their real description. Ranks conferred by the Polish Command were also recognised. These PW were thus protected against reprisals for their political

or military activities before and during the struggle for Warsaw.

In the Polish Army, women were employed as auxiliaries, in administrative posts and hospital units, as liaison agents and so forth. These women were also recognised as PW.

As soon as it was apprised of the terms of the armistice, the Committee gave proof of its concern in the position of members of the Polish Army, especially female PW and young people. It directed the Delegation in Berlin to urge the German Authorities to confine these female prisoners in suitable camps, where they could be treated with due regard to their sex, in accordance with the requirements of the Convention of 1929. The Committee also desired them to see that these women were not "transformed" against their will into civilian workers, and generally to secure observance in this respect of the terms of the armistice. The Committee at the same time made protest to the German Authorities with regard to breaches of agreement reported by its representatives after visits to Polish camps.

On March 2, 1945, the German Foreign Office gave an assurance to the ICRC of the high importance which the German authorities attached to the punctual observance of the terms of surrender, drawn up on October 3, 1944, and added that if, in the early period, regrettable occurrences, such as those mentioned in the reports of the Committee's delegates, had taken place, every possible effort was now being made by the Military Authorities to improve conditions for female PW.

The ICRC continued to urge upon the German and Swiss Authorities the provision, in accordance with Chapter IV of the Convention of 1929, of accommodation in Switzerland for women and young people belonging to the Warsaw army, who were sick or wounded.

The German Authorities, by SS General Kaltenbrunner's letter dated March 2, 1945, indicated their readiness to agree to the accommodation in Switzerland of women and young people who had belonged to General Bor-Komorowski's army, on condition of receiving equivalent concession, and the Swiss Government also expressed its approval in principle of such accommodation.

The course of military operations and technical difficulties

resulting therefrom prevented the execution of this scheme before the German surrender.

(f) *Greek Partisans.* — The ICRC's delegates in Germany had occasion more than once to concern themselves with the position of Greek partisans. A certain number of these and also of Albanians had been taken to Germany and placed in PW camps, where they could be visited. The Committee's delegates had talks with the prisoners' spokesmen, and informed Berlin and Geneva of the destitute condition of these men, and asked for relief supplies to be sent.

In August 1944, the Committee's delegates discovered 500 Greeks and 400 Albanians in Stalag VII A at Moosburg, where they were treated like other PW. In Stalag VI C and VI F at Munster, which were visited in October, 1944, about 700 Greek detainees were treated like PW.

At the request of the Greek Red Cross, in February 1945, the Committee's delegation in Berlin took up the case of 480 Greek partisans confined in Camp VI J at Dorsten. A pressing request was made to the German Authorities that these men should be treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention. But the projected visit to this camp could not be made, because of the many transfers which were taking place at this time.

The Committee's delegates in Berlin also made enquiries about the fate of a large number of Greek civilians who were said to have been deported to Germany on suspicion of pro-partisan activities or collaboration with the insurgents. As a result, the Committee were able to inform the Greek Red Cross in London on November 28, 1944, that most of these deportees had recovered some measure of personal freedom and had been enrolled in labour units. But it had not been possible to ascertain their exact whereabouts.

(B). ITALIAN MILITARY INTERNEES (IMI)

When the armistice was concluded between the Italian Government and the Allied Powers at the beginning of September 1943, the major part of Italy was still occupied by

the German Army, which immediately set about disarming the Italian troops and transferring them to Germany.

The ICRC took the opportunity of the presence in Geneva of a senior German official to ask at once for a nominal roll of the Italian Military Internees. On October 20, 1943, it instructed its representative in Berlin to make clear that in its opinion "the Italian members of the forces and civilians who have been interned in camps after the armistice between Italy, and Great Britain and the United States should be granted the treatment prescribed by the Geneva Convention, with the practical consequences this implies (communication of names of prisoners and internees to the Central Agency—possible despatch of relief—visits to camps by delegates)".

The Supreme German Command replied to this at the end of November that the Italians would be treated on the same footing as French PW; they would be entitled (1) to two five-kilo parcels per month and (2) to the same allowance of mail; their status would not, however, be that of prisoners of war because they were subject to the Neo-Fascist Italian Government which was still Germany's ally, and because Berlin reserved the right to deal direct with that Government, to the exclusion of any international authority, in all that concerned these men. Therefore, it added, the list of these military internees would not be communicated to Geneva, and camp visits would not be allowed, nor would the issue of relief supplies be permitted.

The ICRC nevertheless managed to obtain from the German Government an estimate of the aggregate number of IMI, which amounted to 550,000. These men were granted the right to send personal news by means of "capture cards". By March, 1944, the ICRC had received 180,000 of these cards.

The German authorities intended, in agreement with the Neo-Fascist Italian Government, to convert these internees into free workers, but over a year passed before a beginning was made with the plan. During that year, according to eye-witnesses, their condition was worse than that of PW of any other nationality, even of the Russians. They could neither correspond with their next of kin, nor receive relief parcels, because Southern Italy was occupied by the Allies and transport

was disorganized by war in the North. Cut off from all outside help they were in a state of complete destitution, a prey to physical wasting and tuberculosis, and in conditions of pitiable neglect in regard to hygiene.

The President of the ICRC wrote to the German Government and stressed the necessity of finding a humane solution to this problem. The head of the ICRC Delegation in Berlin was called to the German Chancellery a few days later and informed that a special relief service for IMI had been organized by the Italian Embassy, that this service kept in touch with the Italian Red Cross established in Vienna and that, provided the Italian Delegation saw no objection, the Committee's delegates might visit the military internee camps. In point of fact, during private talks with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Committee's delegate had gathered the impression that the German administration would welcome relief measures for the IMI. It was realized that relief supplies could come only from countries overseas, and the condition upon which the supply of such relief depended was accepted, that is, the presence of delegates of the ICRC to supervise their distribution. It remained to parry the possible objection of the Italian Delegation which, for political reasons, might have wished to keep all the credit for such relief work. The Committee's delegate in Berlin succeeded in countering such a move. The delegates were then granted permission to supervise personally the issue of relief supplies from overseas, provided no mention was made of the source. The President of the ICRC wrote to the Foreign Office in London and had several interviews with the representative in Geneva of the American Red Cross, to keep both parties informed of the German decision. The negotiations, however, to secure relief supplies from overseas, were not finally concluded before the IMI had already been turned into civilian workers. Despite their efforts the ICRC was therefore unable to alleviate the hardships of these men. It was, however, the means of sending off a few isolated consignments of relief.

The German authorities did not recognize as regular combatants members of the Italian army who continued to fight on the Allies' side against Germany. After the 1943 armistice

Marshal Badoglio had, in agreement with the Allied authorities, formed a regular army whose members almost all wore British or American uniform, and some units of which fought on the Italian front. These men were known as "Badoglists". The Committee's delegates in Berlin were assured by the Reich that PW status would be applied to these men, but the delegation was never in a position to assure itself as to their treatment.

On October 11, 1944, the German Government informed the ICRC verbally that members of the Italian army captured on the front would be accorded PW status. It was, however, to be feared that these prisoners would, like the IMI, be turned into civilian workers. In response to a further intervention by the Committee's delegates, the German authorities stated that "combatants of the Royal Italian Army would not be included in this transformation and would enjoy PW status". This promise was communicated to the Italian Minister in Berne on October 16, 1944, by the ICRC.

In the course of a talk in Geneva, a representative of the German Foreign Office confirmed that Italian combatants captured by the German forces after September 1943, were under the protection of the Italian "Dienststelle" in Berlin, and that they were covered by the 1929 PW Convention.

In spite, however, of the stipulations laid down in Art. 77 of that Convention, the ICRC never received any information on these prisoners.

The German authorities were reminded that the Allied High Command in the Mediterranean had given orders that all Republican Italian Combatants who were captured should be granted PW status. The ICRC further pressed its request that its delegates be admitted to camps holding Italian prisoners and that the information for which Art. 77 provides should be sent to Geneva. The Committee pointed out that these combatants had been captured fully armed in the course of operations, and that they were regular soldiers on the fighting strength. The efforts of the delegates were at last successful, and the ICRC obtained lists of "Badoglists" in Stalag IX C at Schellrode.

(C). SURRENDERED ENEMY PERSONNEL (SEP)

The term SEP applies to members of the German and Japanese armies captured by the Allies after the unconditional surrender of these two armies. These prisoners were considered by the detaining military authorities as deprived, by the fact of capitulation, of the protection provided by the 1929 Convention.

In Europe, most German SEP were in Italy where, in September 1945, they numbered 65,000 men. Smaller groups were held in Germany, Austria and Norway. In the Far East SEP was in considerable strength. The Japanese army numbered 3,500,000 men at the time of the capitulation, of whom 1,800,000 were in China and Manchuria, 200,000 in the Philippines, 650,000 in Burma, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, and 850,000 in the Islands of the Pacific.

In their Memorandum of August 21, 1945 the ICRC had admitted that the unconditional surrender of Germany placed these prisoners in a situation without precedent. "This situation", the Committee added, "cannot be governed, at the present time, by an *ad hoc* agreement, to which the Detaining Powers and the State of which these prisoners are nationals might be parties. For this reason, the International Committee, while not being called upon to express an opinion on the situation thus created, considers that the prisoners of war should continue to enjoy all the guarantees to which they are entitled by existing Conventions, and that these Conventions retain their entire significance, even though their normal application be suspended or modified, more especially since one of the belligerent parties has in actual fact disappeared".

It was not long before the Committee's representatives, in Italy for example, observed that these principles were not followed in respect of troops who, as a result of the capitulation, had fallen *en masse* into Allied hands. Prisoners considered as SEP by the British and United States military authorities had personal property impounded without any receipt being given. They had no spokesman to represent them; officers received no pay; other ranks compelled to work got no wages;

officers of the Detaining Power did not return their salute. In any penal proceedings they had the benefit of none of the guarantees provided by the Convention. They were, however, humanely treated, properly fed and in some respects had better conditions than PW, as they remained in units with their own officers ; in labour camps they had some freedom of action.

In the Far East the question of the status of Japanese combatants captured by the Allies was raised for the first time in October, 1945, after intervention in their behalf by the Committee's delegate in Singapore. The British authorities replied that the Convention was not applicable to SEP. The United States Army H.Q. in Tokyo gave a similar reply to the Committee's delegate, and added that the Japanese military personnel captured before September 2, 1945 (date of the capitulation), would continue to be treated as PW, whereas those taken after that date would still be considered as SEP. The United States authorities added, too, that the Committee's delegates might visit camps where these men were detained, upon the consent of G.H.Q. in Tokyo.

In January 1946, the ICRC, on the basis of reports furnished by their representatives in Italy and in the Far East, approached the United States Government in Washington, reminding it that "the stipulations of the Convention apply both to members of the forces captured singly, as well as to whole military formations which surrendered (for example the German army in Tunisia)", and that there was no reason for thinking "that the issue is in any way different when all the combatant forces of a belligerent country lay down their arms simultaneously".

Following this step, instructions in line with the Committee's point of view were given. A circular of the United States Army H.Q. in Europe, dated March 20, 1946, stated that "conditions under which a distinction was originally made between prisoners of war and members of disarmed enemy forces no longer exist. Hence, in order to simplify administration of both these categories of enemy personnel, all such personnel in the future will be referred to and reported as prisoners of war".

This declaration (which was, however, not immediately put

into force) settled the question only of German prisoners in American hands.

In the Far East, the United States and British Authorities adhered to the SEP idea in respect of Japanese prisoners. It should not be forgotten that the Japanese conception of honour could not easily be reconciled with the idea of PW status. The men concerned preferred to that status as defined in the Convention, an arrangement which left them under the authority of their own officers. They were then with their officers, the more willing to obey the supreme order to surrender given by the Emperor. Even so, the ICRC did its best to issue relief to these men by means of Japanese funds still available at the Tokyo Delegation. This relief work is described in the chapter dealing with the Committee's work in the Far East ¹.

The Committee felt it was the moment, however, to remind the British and United States Governments of the need to ensure for SEP conditions more compatible with the provisions of the Convention. On September 6, 1946, the delegates in London and in Washington presented to the Foreign Office and the State Department, a letter which set out once more the situation of these prisoners deprived of the protection of the Convention. It concluded as follows :

The unconditional surrender of the German and Japanese forces, which resulted in their laying down arms without the special reservations usually inserted in armistice conventions, does not *ipso facto* imply that the capitulating Power abandons all claim to the benefits of the Hague and Geneva Conventions in favour of its nationals. The Committee are fully aware of the particular difficulties which face the detaining Authorities in their endeavour to apply certain Articles of the Convention, but they would be glad if these Authorities did not decide, in consequence, to deprive the prisoners completely of the benefit of the stipulations contained in the said Conventions. Furthermore, it should be stressed that the creation of this new category of military detainees imperils the very existence of the status laid down in the Convention of 1929 relative to Prisoners of War. The International Committee cannot remain indifferent to this situation, and consider it their duty to draw the attention of Governments to the dangers that might arise in the future from the existence of such a precedent, which might be invoked

¹ See above.

by any belligerent State. There can be no doubt that it is in the interest of all States to be assured in peace time that, in the event of war, their nationals captured by the enemy shall always benefit by the application of the Conventions concluded for the purpose of ensuring the protection of Prisoners of War.

The Foreign Office replied on February 20, 1947. While recognizing that it might be possible to claim that surrendered enemy personnel fall within the definition of PW in Art. 1 of the Convention and in Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention of 1907, the British Government pointed out that it is very doubtful whether such a situation as occurred in Europe and the Far East in 1945, when very large numbers of men surrendered *en masse*, was contemplated at all, at the time when either the Hague or the Geneva Convention was drafted. His Majesty's Government added that had an armistice been signed in 1945, provision would have been expressly made in it to recognize this distinction between SEP and prisoners of war. Independently, however, of this legal aspect of the question, the ICRC were assured that "in practice" SEP were made the object of no discrimination "from the humanitarian point of view". While, for a considerable period after capitulation, it was impossible for Commanders-in-Chief to do more than ensure that captives were treated as humanely as possible, instructions had been given for improvement of these men's status, and in framing these instructions, the Convention of 1929 had been kept constantly in view. In May 1946, it was "decided that in all cases where it was possible to extend to Surrendered Enemy Personnel, wholly or in part, the benefits of the Convention, it should be done, but this should not be stated to be done in accordance with the Convention, since it would naturally lead to claims to rights under the Convention which could not be conceded".

The State Department in Washington replied on March 17, 1947 as follows:— "It is the policy of this Government that such detainees be given the same status as prisoners of war. You are assured that the Committee's report is being brought to the attention of the military commanders concerned, and that appropriate steps are being taken to insure that all enemy

military personnel still in American hands have the treatment provided for in the Geneva Convention."

In conformity with this promise, the prisoners were paid for their work, according to the scale fixed for PW. This decision had retrospective effect as from September 1, 1946. The ICRC stressed the importance of pay being granted prisoners as from the beginning of their captivity, and the United States Government gave its agreement on that point.

(D). TRANSFERRED PRISONERS

The Convention of 1929 in Art. 25 and 26 covers the "Transfer of Prisoners of War"; it stipulates what provisions must be made for the transport of the wounded and sick, and lays down that satisfactory measures must be taken to ensure that prisoners have possession of their personal effects and that their mail is forwarded to them. These clauses apparently covered only transfers within the territory of the Detaining Power. They laid down, apart from these particular stipulations, no general principle concerning transfer of PW by a Detaining Power to one of its allies.

The question arises whether such transfers are compatible with the Convention. As the signatories have undertaken to treat PW with humanity "at all times" (Art. 2) and to repatriate them (Art. 75), can they shift these responsibilities on to another Power, when handing over to it any prisoners in their hands?

Here was a serious problem of which the Convention makes no mention. It became a matter of constant concern to the Committee when the United States authorities agreed to hand over to the French Government a large number of German PW as labour for reconstruction work in France.

Clearly, any Detaining Power signatory to the Convention accepts the responsibility of according to PW throughout their captivity such treatment as international law demands. The ICRC has always held that a particular Power could in no circumstances hand over prisoners to an allied Power not party to the Convention, since these men would then, at once, be

deprived of protection under the terms of the Convention. And even in the case of transfers taking place between two Powers, both of them signatories to the Convention, it should not result for the prisoners transferred that they have less favourable treatment.

The ICRC took a stand on this matter in its Memorandum of August 21, 1945 addressed to the Governments of France, Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the United States :

“ Certain transfers of PW ”, the Committee wrote, “ have been carried out, the prisoners thus passing from the custody of one Detaining Power to that of another Allied Power. Although no reference to such transfers can be found in existing Conventions, the question may be raised whether, in obedience to the spirit of Articles 2 and 75 of the 1929 Convention, the Detaining Powers are entitled to dispose in this manner of the prisoners who are in their hands. However this may be, should measures of this kind be decided upon, the International Committee are of opinion that such a step should in no wise involve a weakening of the guarantees to which the prisoners are entitled by Convention, nor modify their *de facto* position.

The International Committee, therefore, consider that such transferred PW should, at all events, benefit by treatment at least equal, or equivalent, to that they would have enjoyed, had they remained in the custody of the Power by whom they were detained in the first place. They should, in particular, be allowed the same facilities of notifying their next of kin, and of receiving regular mail and relief parcels, and should be ensured adequate conditions of hygiene and visits by an approved organization ”.

In practice, this carrying over of the responsibility of the initial Detaining Power was generally recognized. In the particular case of the transfer of German prisoners by the United States authorities to the French, both Governments gave full attention to the interventions of the ICRC.

During 1945, a number of complaints were received at Geneva concerning the conditions of health of German prisoners in France, who were inadequately clothed and fed and, at the same time, compelled to do very heavy work. This situation, mainly due to the severe lack of supplies from which the French themselves were suffering, was investigated by the Committee's delegates. When the United States authorities were informed,

they decided in October 1945 to suspend transfers of PW to the French authorities. These transfers were resumed in February 1946, but only after exhaustive negotiations between the two Governments, and were then continued until June 30, 1946. The number of men transferred, some 450,000, is much below the figure which had been estimated.

We have mentioned above¹ the case of the German officers in Foucarville Camp, to whom the United States Authorities had promised repatriation, but who, owing to their subsequent transfer to the British Authorities, seemed likely to be deprived of this prospect. The ICRC intervened in their behalf in London and in Washington and secured a fair settlement of the question.

(E). "TRANSFORMED" PRISONERS OF WAR

Considering the general character of Art. 82, according to which "the provisions of the present Convention shall be respected by the High Contracting Parties in all circumstances", the right which these same Powers have reserved to themselves in Art. 83 "to conclude special conventions on all questions relating to PW concerning which they may consider it desirable to make special provision" seems remarkably limited. Logically, it can apply only to the implementing of principles laid down in the Convention. No appreciable modification of the Convention could result from it.

For this reason, modifications made to the status of PW in order to "transform" them into civilian workers call for explicit reservations. It is, however, in keeping with the spirit of Art. 83 that all "more favourable measures by one or the other of the belligerent Powers concerning the prisoners detained by that Power" are substituted for the previous régime. This same comment may be used in support of such "transformations" when rigours of captivity are thereby made less harsh.

¹ See p. 338.

There are, however, serious objections to the transformation of PW into political detainees.

The ICRC, in registering its objections and reservations in regard to these various cases of transforming the status of PW, still continued to give its customary assistance to prisoners who had been "transformed" into civilian workers.

1. Transformation into Civilian Workers

In 1943 the German Government was short of labour for carrying out its armament programme and conceived the idea of transforming PW into civilian workers in order to circumvent Art. 31 of the Convention, which forbids employment of PW in the manufacture of arms or munitions. Against a certain number of material advantages (civilian clothes, compensation bonus, family allowances, mail facilities, leave) PW who were given "captivity leave" were required to relinquish the status defined by the 1929 Convention.

In the case of French prisoners, this measure was notified to the Vichy Government and the men concerned could, if necessary, apply for help to French offices which had charge of their interests in Germany. It was a very different matter for the Belgian, Dutch and Polish prisoners who, once "transformed", lost all protection under international law, and were left unreservedly to the mercy of the Detaining Power.

On August 23, 1943, the ICRC sent the following note, appealing to the Governments of belligerent States :

"The International Committee of the Red Cross desire to draw the particular attention of the belligerents to the situation with regard to rights the PW have acquired, both under the terms of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and according to the general principles of international law, regardless of the time of capture during the present conflict.

"It would appear that, according to information received by the International Committee, certain categories of prisoners have, as a result of diverse circumstances, been deprived of their PW status and of the conventional rights arising therefrom. The Committee, therefore, earnestly recommend that the Powers concerned ensure that the provisions by which the prisoners benefit, be safeguarded under all circumstances and until the termination of hostilities".

While the transformation of PW into civilian workers offered them certain material advantages, the inherent disadvantages became more and more serious as the internal situation in Germany deteriorated. "Transformed" prisoners were no longer subject to military jurisdiction. They lost the benefit of the Articles of the Convention which ensure certain rights in case of legal proceedings. If there was any dispute with their employer, they came into the power of the German civil police, who could either submit the case to the ordinary courts or send the men to disciplinary or concentration camps as "political detainees". These camps, it will be recalled, were barred to the Committee's delegates.

As to the repatriation of wounded and sick, as stipulated by the Convention, the German administration gave a consistent refusal, asserting that men who had worked a certain time in the German war industry might carry secrets of manufacture to the enemy.

"Transformed" prisoners had advantages at first in regard to letters and parcels. When postal communications between France and Germany ceased, the ICRC proposed to the French and German authorities that the 25-word civilian message system should be adopted. The Committee undertook, from September 1944, to forward this mail, and came to the assistance of the French Red Cross, to speed up exchange of messages by sorting them in Geneva. The same service was given to the German Red Cross. From November 1944, the system worked satisfactorily.

The Provisional Government of the French Republic then asked that French PW "transformed" into civilian workers should enjoy the same mail facilities as those granted to PW. The Committee did not think it advisable to take steps in this matter, lest it endanger the results already achieved.

Where relief was concerned, it was long impossible for the ICRC to get parcels through to "transformed" prisoners, owing to its undertakings to donors and the blockade authorities. It was only during the last weeks of the war that they were able to supply both "transformed" prisoners and civilian workers.

A few days after publication of the appeal of August 23, 1945, mentioned above, the Italian Government asked the Allied Powers for an armistice. There was a large number of Italian PW in Allied hands. Anxious to exploit their new relations with Italy to advantage, the British and United States Governments, in their turn, set about "transforming" these prisoners into civilian workers, and so overstepped the limits placed by the Convention on employment of PW labour. Negotiations followed, and led to an agreement between the Badoglio Government and the British and United States Governments.

On March 9, 1944, the Secretary of State for War said in the House of Commons :

To give effect to the Italian Government's declaration of co-belligerency and to enable those anxious to do so to join most effectively in the common war effort, Italian prisoners of war under the control of H.M. Government in the United Kingdom who have volunteered are being formed into units organized on a military basis.

The Regulations published by the United States Army H.Q., Communications Zone, European Theatre of Operations on March 5, 1945, ran along much the same lines :

Italian co-operators may be utilized for any type of work in the furtherance of the Allied effort, without regard to the restrictions imposed by Art. 31 and 32 of the Geneva Convention of 1929.

The document goes on to state that :

Members of Italian service units, i.e. "co-operators", are prisoners of war, having been captured by US forces in North Africa and Sicily. They have been screened as secure, have voluntarily signed a "Declaration of Service", and as a result of diplomatic negotiations between the Allied Nations and the Provisional Italian Government, their status as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention of 1929 has been modified. Their status is therefore governed by the agreements made with their government.

Despite the material advantages granted to "co-operators" (same type of lodging, clothing, food and pay as British and United States troops, more or less extensive liberty inside camp

and the immediate neighbourhood), quite a large number of Italian prisoners refused the new status offered them.

The "transformation" system instituted by the Allied Governments did not entirely remove the men from the Committee's supervision, or that of the Protecting Power. Permission had to be sought, however, every time the delegates made a visit to the camps. Visits were allowed on humanitarian grounds only and no longer by virtue of the Convention. Intervention, too, by the Protecting Power was allowed only in the case of legal proceedings taken against the "transformed" prisoner.

After ascertaining from its Washington delegation what considerations had determined the agreement between the two Powers, the ICRC felt it unnecessary to repeat its appeal of August 23, 1943. It maintained, however, the stand it had taken in that document, and continued to give help to "transformed" Italian prisoners as to other PW. Although "co-operators" usually stated they were satisfied with the treatment given to them (particularly in India, where large farms and veterinary hospitals were run entirely by Italians), nevertheless, visits from ICRC delegates were always keenly appreciated.

When, in 1947, the French Government were concerned with "transforming" in their turn German prisoners into civilian workers, there were no German authorities with whom to negotiate, the German State having ceased to exist at the moment of the unconditional surrender of the armed forces. It was the ICRC, in fact, that in a sense assumed the role of Protecting Power for German PW. It was, therefore, to the ICRC that the French Government turned, after having drafted their plan in agreement with the United States Government, on whom still rested the responsibility for the 450,000 prisoners transferred to the French authorities.

This plan comprised a programme of repatriation and transformation into civilian workers of some proportion of the German PW detained in France. These men were to be allowed to opt freely for this new scheme, which entitled them to a contract similar to that of other aliens working in France.

It was understood, at the same time, that in all circumstances they would have rights at least equivalent to those ensured by the 1929 Convention. The ICRC was asked not only to continue supervision for these "transformed" prisoners, but also to watch over the registering of the option and so to guarantee freedom of choice.

The Committee did not fall in with that proposal. The principles laid down in its Memorandum of August 21, 1945, precluded its acceptance of any responsibility for a modification of a status which, however advantageous from certain points of view, differed nevertheless in essence from the solution the ICRC had always advised; it could not depart from its advocacy of total and final repatriation of PW at the earliest date after the end of the war. The Committee informed the French Government, that even so, it would continue to give its customary help to these men, and also to those who had lately become civilian workers. The delegates would keep up their visits to both groups, before, during and after the taking of the option. The ICRC would receive the complaints of both "transformed" and regular PW, examine them, bring them before the responsible authorities and ask for appropriate measures to be taken to meet each case. These complaints might relate to the position of "transformed" prisoners, or of those still held in captivity, or they might refer to the conditions under which option was carried out, or its effects. The Committee reserved the right, moreover, of putting these questions themselves to PW. Thus, the ICRC held to its opinion in the letter and in the spirit, and from which it never moved, that in fulfilment of the Convention there should be as little delay as possible in the repatriation of PW.

During the Paris Conference in March 1947, the ICRC secured acceptance of the principle that prisoners of war who had opted for civilian worker status should have the power, within six weeks of signature of their contract, to withdraw their own decision after appealing to Geneva.

The Ministry of Labour in France, putting into effect that agreement, published two circulars in the "*Journal officiel*" of April 18 and June 26, 1947, on the subject of German PW

“ transformed ” into civilian workers. Acting on the publication of these circulars, the Committee's Delegation in Paris issued seven notes to their representatives in France. According to information furnished by the French authorities to the ICRC, some 85,000 prisoners opted for “ transformation ” under these conditions.

2. Transformation into Political Detainees

Another category of PW consists of men discharged as prisoners and interned as civilian detainees because of their connection with the National-Socialist Party. In line with the arrest of civilians on a similar charge, they were placed in internment camps by the occupying Powers and so lost their rights under the Convention.

When the ICRC had word of such cases, it instructed its delegates in the Allied occupation zones to approach the responsible authorities. In the view of the Committee, only repatriation and final liberation could follow the end of PW captivity, and so release the Detaining Powers from obligations they had contracted. Rights acquired by PW at the moment of their capture, should, in the view of the Committee, be inalienable until their final liberation, and they could in no case be deprived of them subsequently by a unilateral decision of the Detaining Power. Obviously, in maintaining this point of view, the ICRC had no wish to hinder legal proceedings against certain prisoners, but they considered that this did not warrant depriving these men of the status to which they were entitled and further that, during the proceedings, PW should simply be considered as suspect and could not be deprived of benefit under the Convention.

The Committee's delegates first took action in November 1945. They asked for permission to visit the detainees in question and mentioned that it was due from them to make application, in this case, to the Allied authorities, just as during the war they had applied to the German Authorities in behalf of deportees in Germany.

The Committee's delegates were able to visit, from the beginning of 1946, the camps in the British and French Zones.

In the American Zone, however, they have not so far been allowed to visit civilian detainee camps which have been placed by the American authorities under German control. Since the spring of 1947, however, the ICRC has obtained permission to visit camps under the direct authority of the Americans.

In Austria, the Committee's delegates were permitted to visit political detainee camps in the three Western Occupation Zones. As a result of these visits improvements were made in the conditions of detainees, and similar benefits were secured also for "transformed" prisoners of war.

(F). MERCHANT SEAMEN

Formerly legal practice sanctioned capture in time of war of merchant seamen. Influenced mainly by German writers, the opinion of jurists altered, and the 1907 Peace Conference, held at the Hague, laid down in the Ninth Convention a rule in the contrary sense, according to which merchant seamen "are not made prisoners of war, on condition that they make a formal promise in writing not to undertake, while hostilities last, any service connected with the operations of the war".

Maritime warfare, as practised during the first World War, made these stipulations obsolete. Merchant vessels, though not intended to take an active part in hostilities, were nevertheless armed and might take part in offensive operations. Enemy merchant seamen, in fact, were, as in the past, captured and detained as prisoners.

Even so, when the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva drew up the 1929 Convention for PW, it was not considered necessary to mention this practice, and adherence to the Hague Regulations was preferred. A proposal by the Rumanian Delegation stating explicitly that "crews of enemy merchant vessels... shall be considered as prisoners of war", was ruled out by the Conference and the competent Commission stated that "It is clear from the text (Art. 1)... that the Convention is applicable to all persons belonging to the armed forces of the belligerent parties—which description does not include crews of merchant ships".

The 1929 Convention therefore makes no mention of merchant seamen. During the second World War, the merchant marine was exposed to the same practices as in the first War. Crews of prizes and survivors of naval operations were always taken prisoner but, in default of precise regulations, there was no uniformity of treatment at the hands of the belligerents. Brazil, Germany, Italy, South Africa and the United States, placed merchant seamen on the same footing as civilian internees. Australia, Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand considered them as PW by extension of Part VII of the Convention (" Application of the Convention to certain categories of Civilians "). This last group of States applied, however, neither Art. 23 relative to pay, nor Art. 27 relative to employment, but with these exceptions the men were, for the most part, subject to the same regulations as civilian internees.

Efforts of the Committee in their behalf encountered no particular difficulties ; they were similar to those in favour of PW and civilian internees. The financial situation of merchant seamen was, however, often far more of a problem than that of PW. They could rarely find paid work, even if the Detaining Power allowed them enough freedom to look for employment. As they had not even the means for buying bare necessities, they were completely destitute. In some cases, the Government of their own country, or the company in whose employ they had been, made them a small allowance through the intermediary of either the Protecting Power or the ICRC. The Committee repeatedly drew the attention of the authorities in the men's own country and of the Detaining Powers, to the difficulties of these merchant seamen. The problem was especially acute in the case of officers of the Italian merchant marine detained in Australia. They were, at first, classed as civilian internees. After two years of internment they were, however, accorded the status of PW. They then received a little financial relief from Italy, but later these allowances ceased.

The Committee's intervention in behalf of German seamen held in Portuguese India encountered obstacles, owing to the fact that this was neutral territory. These seamen, who remained on board their ships, were completely isolated. The

Committee's delegate in India was able to visit them and issue relief sent from Germany. After scuttling their ships in March 1943, these men were interned in a prison. Several were condemned to terms of imprisonment. The Committee's delegate visited them again and brought them relief supplies.

The ICRC also looked into the case of German and Italian merchant seamen interned in Saudi Arabia, but failed in its attempts to have them transferred to a more temperate climate.

In Germany, enemy merchant seamen were not placed in the same camps as civilian internees, but in the "Milag" Section of a camp for naval prisoners. The Committee's delegates were therefore able to visit them, usually without difficulty.

In one case, however, the Committee had to take special steps in behalf of Norwegian seamen. These men were at Gothenburg, in Sweden, where they were taking part in a maritime exhibition when Germany attacked Norway. They were captured in the Skagerak by the German forces and were, at first, interned in a naval PW camp. In 1943, the Committee learnt that the "Gothenburg seamen" had been transferred to a concentration camp, where they were cut off from the outside world. It attempted several times to come to their help. "These men are protected by no Convention", it wrote to the German Government on March 13, 1945, "but the ICRC holds the opinion, based on sound legal considerations and humanitarian convictions, that seamen who are not attached to the enemy's armed forces are entitled, beyond all possible doubt, when in captivity, to the most favourable régime..."

The intervention just mentioned is a striking proof, it would appear, that revision of the Hague Regulations governing crews of merchant ships is now due. The treatment of captured merchant seamen in both World Wars demonstrates that those Regulations no longer serve.

XIV. Internees in Neutral Countries

(A). INTRODUCTION

The circumstances of the second World War, as in 1914-1918, brought a fairly large number of men from the belligerent forces either singly or in groups, into neutral States, where they were interned, together with other combatants, such as escaped PW and deserters, as well as civilian refugees.

The ICRC took all steps which seemed necessary for giving them relief, but its activities were of course far more limited in scope than those carried out in belligerent States in the interest of PW and civilian internees. Combatant and civilian refugees in neutral countries were in fact not in the hands of the enemy, but in those of a neutral State, where they could usually call upon the diplomatic representatives of their respective countries to look after their interests.

The relief work of the Committee in behalf of internees in neutral countries was especially active in Switzerland. It was here, because of the country's geographical situation, that the greatest number of refugees of all kinds were to be found. Here too, the authorities' frequent appeals to the Committee were made the easier by the fact of its headquarters being in Geneva. The ICRC, however, also made efforts in behalf of internees or refugees of the countries at war, in Arabia, the Argentine, Eire, Hungary, Iran, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Uruguay, and was on many occasions able to give useful assistance.

(B). MILITARY INTERNEES

I. General Activities

The internment in neutral countries of combatants belonging to the belligerent armed forces finds only a summary and very inadequate ruling in international law. The subject is, in the main, dealt with in Articles 11 to 15 of the Fifth Hague Convention of 1907, in the following terms :—

Article 11. — A neutral Power which receives on its territory troops belonging to the belligerent armies shall intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war.

It may keep them in camps and even confine them in fortresses or in places set apart for this purpose.

It shall decide whether officers can be left at liberty on giving their parole not to leave the neutral territory without permission.

Article 12. — In the absence of a special convention to the contrary, the neutral Power shall supply the interned with the food, clothing, and relief required by humanity.

At the conclusion of peace the expenses caused by the internment shall be made good.

Article 13. — A neutral Power which receives escaped prisoners of war shall leave them at liberty. If it allows them to remain in its territory it may assign them a place of residence.

The same rule applies to prisoners of war brought by troops taking refuge in the territory of a neutral Power.

Article 15. — The Geneva Convention applies to sick and wounded interned in neutral territory ¹.

The 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of PW does not apply to military internees in neutral countries. Art. 77 of this Convention does, however, make it incumbent upon neutral States who have admitted belligerents to their territory, as upon belligerent States, to establish official information bureaux. These offices are required to transmit to the Powers concerned, through the intermediary of the Protecting Powers

¹ "The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907" Carnegie Endowment. New York, 1915.

or of the Central PW Agency, all information concerning interned personnel of armed forces.

Also, Art. 49 of the International Postal Convention (Cairo, 1934), provides for the exemption of postal charges on correspondence and parcels intended for military internees in neutral countries, as for PW.

Neutral States. — The Swiss Government agreed, in June 1940, to receive on their territory and to intern 32,000 men of the 45th French Army Corps and 13,000 men of the 2nd Polish Division. After the repatriation of the French internees in January 1941, the Polish Division remained, and in 1943, the authorities interned 23,000 men of the Italian forces. In addition, individual internments during hostilities amounted to 7,000 combatants belonging to 37 different nationalities.

In September 1939, *Rumania* received 20,000 men of the Polish forces, who were interned. *Hungary* received 36,000, *Lithuania* 14,000 and *Latvia* 1,600. Other neutral countries gave refuge to a limited number of military internees of various nationalities.

Information. — At the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC drew the attention of neutral States to Art. 77 and 79 of the 1929 Convention, and stressed that these States would be well advised to set up without delay, official bureaux for communicating information relating to military internees to the Central Agency. The neutral States agreed in principle to this suggestion and set up information bureaux for this purpose. In practice, however, the Central Agency experienced some difficulty in obtaining detailed and regular data by lists. Switzerland alone gave regular notice of changes in the internees' circumstances (sickness, deaths, etc.).

From 1940 onwards, the Agency began to receive a continuous flow of enquiries from the relatives of combatants interned in Switzerland, or supposed to be there, to which they were able to reply, from the descriptive data supplied by the Swiss authorities. With the assistance of the Swiss military postal service, the Agency distributed the heavy mail arriving from

relatives. As many of the internees, and the Poles in particular, were anxious to have news of their relatives, who were often scattered in different places, the Agency, in May 1941, began making searches based on the enquiry cards issued to internment centres. One section of these cards was marked "Requests", which allowed internees to make known to the ICRC their wishes regarding the conditions of internment, at a time when the Committee had not yet instituted visits to the camps. The increasing number of military internees, escaped prisoners and civilian refugees led the ICRC in January 1942, to set up a special section of the Central Agency which collected and supplied information on all refugees in Switzerland ¹.

The Committee's delegate in Rumania, together with the Rumanian Red Cross, set up in September 1939, a message service by forms, which was used by the Polish internees and refugees who wished to have news of their relatives in Poland. These messages came to Geneva in thousands, and served as a basis for the first Polish card index in the Central Agency. When postal communications were again resumed, the messages were sent on direct to Poland.

Postal franchise. — On November 6, 1939, the ICRC circulated an appeal to all States concerned to apply free postage to correspondence and parcels, as provided for by the Cairo Convention and, in addition to this, to grant free postage for parcels exceeding the weights allowed by the parcel post, to enable the dispatch of collective relief to internees ². This appeal, followed by others of the same kind, gave satisfactory results.

Treatment. — The ICRC was also anxious to know the conditions in which military internees in neutral countries lived, and it approached the Powers concerned on several occasions with this object. In the absence of definite treaty stipulations covering conditions of internment and treatment, the Committee always laid stress on the principle that conditions for

¹ See Vol. II, Part II.

² See Vol. III, Part III, Chapter 7.

internees in a neutral country should be at least equal to those in force for PW in enemy hands. In its circular letter of April 9, 1940, addressed to the neutral Powers most directly concerned, it proposed that, as a minimum scale, the provisions of the 1929 Convention should be applied, by analogy, to military internees. From Budapest and Bucharest, the Committee received the assurance that the 1929 Convention would be applied in full for military internees. The Swiss authorities, whilst admitting that the stipulations of the Convention were by analogy applicable to internees, were not willing to agree that the conditions provided should be the minimum scale. The Government cited, as example, several instances in which the 1929 Convention could not well be applied, e.g. the deterrents to escape, for which the disciplinary punishments in force for PW appeared inadequate ; the rate of pay for officers, which seemed too high ; the employment of internees which could not offer the same accident insurance as that for Swiss workers.

The Swedish Government declined to agree, pointing out that by receiving members of belligerent forces in their territory, neutral States were liable to run into great difficulties, and that it would not be fair to add to their problems by subjecting them to the extremely detailed provisions of the 1929 Convention which were, in any case, difficult to apply to military internees.

On the whole, the treatment of these internees in Switzerland was by no means less favourable than that laid down by the 1929 Convention for PW. Only the disciplinary punishments for attempted escape were more severe, owing to the fact that States which have interned members of belligerent forces on their territory, are under an obligation to the Powers at war to prevent their escape.

Repatriation. — The ICRC made an approach to neutral States holding large numbers of internees, to find out their intentions as to the repatriation of members of the medical personnel amongst them. The Committee held that the provisions of the Geneva Convention for the repatriation of medical personnel captured by the enemy, should by analogy also apply to the same personnel interned in neutral countries. Hungary,

Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania and Switzerland held the same point of view, which corresponded moreover with the practice followed by the belligerent Powers, whereby medical personnel and hospital staff might be employed in the care of their interned fellow-countrymen, and should only be repatriated if their numbers were in excess of those required. Switzerland fixed the proportion of medical officers at 3.3 per cent in relation to the number of internees.

On some occasions, internees in neutral countries appealed to the ICRC on the grounds that they were liable to repatriation against their will. In such cases the Committee recalled to the notice of the Powers concerned, the principle which it has at all times maintained, that no person may be repatriated against his will, if he should have any valid objections. Other internees requested the Committee to hasten their repatriation, and all possible efforts were made to achieve this.

2. Work of the Committee's delegates

The ICRC made application to neutral States which had interned members of belligerent forces, to enable its delegates to visit the camps, as had been arranged for PW camps in belligerent countries, and this was usually granted in due course.

Switzerland and Liechtenstein. — The ICRC was at first only granted authority for occasional camp visits, but as from April 1944, regular visits were allowed. Four delegates were officially accredited to the Swiss authorities, who made all arrangements for them to carry out their duties, which brought them in touch with nationals of thirty-seven different countries. The delegates chosen by the Committee for this work had a wide knowledge of languages, and it was a great solace to the English-speaking, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Yugoslav internees to be able to talk with them in their own language. The delegates had to deal with a number of questions concerning the equipment and arrangement of the camps. They discussed practical questions of improvement in camp conditions with the commandants, and cleared up misunderstandings due to lack

of mutual comprehension. Above all, it was their task to raise the morale of men suffering from a prolonged absence of freedom and the atmosphere of camp life.

During their visits, delegates drew up lists of internees who were without news of their relatives, for transmission to the Central PW Agency. They gave especial attention to the internees' hygiene and health, and forwarded to Geneva all requests for dental treatment, medicines, spectacles, etc. The delegates visited at regular intervals the internees who were in hospital or in sanatoria, and by discussion with the doctors and staff ensured that the wishes of the patients should be met as far as possible. Requests for relief in kind or material for intellectual and similar pursuits were sent to the departments concerned of the ICRC, or the YMCA.

When visiting camps in Switzerland (as elsewhere), the delegates received numerous individual or collective requests and complaints from the internees. These they recorded in their reports, together with any comments or decisions. The complaints and reports were transmitted by the ICRC to the authorities concerned, asking them to investigate the facts and to take action in behalf of the internees, where necessary. In Switzerland, the authorities responded, as a rule, to these requests; investigations were made and those claims which were found to be justified—some were not—were given due consideration. All questions connected with lodging, clothing, food, work, hygiene and medical care were given most careful thought.

The number of visits made by the Committee's delegates to military internment camps in Switzerland, since 1944, amounted to 864; their field of action also covered the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Rumania. — The ICRC had the services of a delegate from the outbreak of war. On the way to Poland, he was obliged by military operations to break his journey at Bucharest on September 23, 1939. He took advantage of his stay in Rumania to investigate the condition of the many Polish internees in that country. They were found to be receiving treatment

similar to that of the Rumanian troops, and moreover they were nearly all repatriated in 1940. In May 1943, a special mission, consisting of M. E. Chapuisat, a member of the Committee, and M. D. de Traz, visited PW camps in Rumania and Polish internees, who were then few in number. At the beginning of 1944, a permanent delegate was appointed in Rumania, who visited the few Yugoslav airmen interned there.

Hungary. — In October 1939, Mr. M. Davis, joint delegate of the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, visited Polish internee camps, which were in good order and well run thanks to the Hungarian Red Cross. The internees received the same pay as the Hungarian troops. The majority were repatriated in 1940, and those who remained kept their status as military internees after Hungary entered the war. During their journey in May 1943, MM. Chapuisat and de Traz visited 26 Polish internee camps, four camps for escaped French, Italian and Yugoslav PW, and a camp for Slovak deserters. From the summer of 1943 onwards, when a permanent delegate was appointed in Budapest, the internees and escaped PW received regular visits, amounting in all to 52. The delegate was able to verify that military internees received the same pay as the national forces, better rations than the civil population, and were under less onerous surveillance than in 1940.

Slovakia. — In May 1943, MM. Chapuisat and de Traz visited French and Yugoslav internees.

Lithuania and Latvia. — Internees were visited in December, 1939 and January 1940 by the joint delegate of the ICRC and the League, which resulted in relief consignments being organized.

Eire. — In December 1943 and in July 1945, an ICRC delegate was able to visit the British and German airmen interned in that country.

Spain. — Military internees were assembled for the most part in the camp of Miranda de Ebro, which they shared with a number of civilians, and were subject to the same regulations as these civil detainees. It was not until 1943 that the Committee's delegate in Spain got permission to visit this camp ;

he found conditions there very precarious. He returned several times between then and June 1945 and remained in close touch with the commandant and the camp leader. He was thus able, by means of application to the responsible authorities, to obtain considerable improvements as regards lodging, sanitary installations, and recreation. Food and clothing, however, were unsatisfactory for a long time. Four small camps were used for internment besides that at Miranda. One of them held Italians, and two others Austrian and German customs officials. The delegate was able to visit these camps after long negotiations.

Portuguese India (Goa and Damao). — Escaped German and Italian prisoners were visited by the Committee's delegate in India from 1942 onwards, and he was able to do them many services.

Portuguese East Africa. — The escaped Italian PW had visits from June, 1945 onwards, from the delegate in Rhodesia.

Argentine and Uruguay. — The Committee's delegates made regular visits to the German sailors who were part of the crew of the warship *Graf von Spee* and the seamen of a merchant vessel.

Saudi Arabia and Yemen. — Nine hundred German and Italian sailors interned at Jidda were visited in March, 1942 by the Committee's delegates in Egypt, who were able to send them regular relief supplies and medicaments bought with funds from their own countries. They were also able to look after the mail of these men. Similar services were done for a small number of internees in the Yemen.

Sweden. — The ICRC was not given authority to visit military internees; these men were however seen by their own diplomatic representatives.

(C). OTHER CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS OF BELLIGERENT FORCES IN NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

In addition to military internees proper, already described, mention should be made of certain other classes of members of belligerent forces in neutral countries.

Escaped PW. — The principal category consists of escaped PW, who had fled the country of the Detaining Power and sought refuge on neutral territory, or more frequently, attempted in this way to reach their own countries.

The Fifth Hague Convention stipulates that a neutral Power which receives escaped prisoners of war shall leave them at liberty¹. The neutral Power is therefore not under obligation, as in the case of military internees, to prevent their leaving its territory or rejoining the armed forces to which they belong. Thus, numbers of French prisoners who had escaped from Germany and entered Switzerland were passed into the unoccupied zone in France; this practice continued until the German forces occupied the whole of French territory.

At that time, Switzerland was completely surrounded by Axis belligerents, so that escaped prisoners arriving in that country were obliged to remain there. In view of the influx of large numbers of escaped prisoners, the Swiss authorities first placed them in quarters under surveillance, and then in camps, where conditions were similar to those of military internee camps.

The ICRC looked after their interests in the same way as those of military internees.

At the end of the war, the Swiss authorities, on the grounds that conditions were then very different from those during the war, declined to receive escaped prisoners in Swiss territory and gave orders that they should be turned back. Those who escaped were almost exclusively from France. The ICRC, in an effort to forestall excessive measures being taken on their return to French territory, made several appeals to the French and Swiss Authorities. The two countries finally concluded an agreement putting the question on a satisfactory footing. Moreover, the Committee's delegates visited in prison those who had escaped before their expulsion, arranged for them to write to their relatives, and reported their needs to voluntary welfare organizations.

Other neutral countries in which the ICRC carried out relief

¹ See above, p. 556, Art. 13 of this Convention.

schemes also received escaped PW. When these were obliged to stay in the country, the Committee was able to give them aid on the same scale as for military internees.

The fairly large number of PW who escaped into Spain after the end of the war were not turned back, but were interned and treated as military internees. The Spanish authorities offer no obstacle to the repatriation of those who wish to return, as long as they are authorized to do so by the occupying Powers in Germany. Since it has however not yet been possible to settle the costs of such repatriation, although the Committee is taking active steps about this, these escaped men have still not been able to return home.

Deserters and Partisans. — In addition to military internees and escaped PW certain neutral States gave shelter to deserters and " defaulters ". In Switzerland they were treated as military internees. With regard to " partisans ", they also were included within the grade of military internees, when their status as combatants was proved. When their status was in doubt they were held to be civilian refugees ¹.

(D). CIVILIAN REFUGEES IN NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

As a result of military and political events a great number of civilians from belligerent countries were driven to seek refuge in neutral territory, either singly or in groups. The refugees included persons who were in flight before military invasion or police measures threatening their lives, emigrants, persecuted Jews, stateless persons and similar classes. When their stay in neutral countries was allowed, these refugees were usually interned by the authorities in camps, or accommodation centres. Although these civilians were subject only to the jurisdiction

¹ It may be noted that members of belligerent forces who were seriously sick, for the most part former PW, were given accommodation in hospital by the Swiss Government, as a result of agreements made between Switzerland and the States concerned. These hospital cases did not have recourse to the services of the ICRC.

of the neutral country in which they were living, and no international convention could be applied for their protection, the ICRC made efforts to carry out measures of relief in their behalf, as they did for military internees.

Thus, in Switzerland, authority was given to the ICRC in the spring of 1944 for visits to civilian camps and centres. Two delegates were appointed for this work, and the number of their visits amounted to 323. The diversity of race, nationality, language and creed made their task one of great tact and patience. They became the counsellors of persons who were often suffering profound distress of mind. The delegates made every effort to help, by interpreting their needs to the authorities in charge of camps and centres, in order that the many requests they received might be considered. In cases where the ICRC thought that individual or collective complaints should be laid before the Central Management of the camps, these authorities opened investigations which were conducted in a very liberal spirit, and in which a delegate was often able to take part.

A great many Polish civilian refugees were received by Hungary, Latvia, Rumania and Lithuania in September 1939. At the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, they were visited by the joint mission of the ICRC and the League, when efforts were made to arrange for the sending of relief supplies.

PART IV

CIVILIANS

I. General Remarks

The reader has seen what the ICRC was able to do for the wounded and sick members of the forces, and especially for prisoners of war. Though the Committee submitted for their relief humanitarian proposals to the Powers going far beyond treaty stipulations, its work was, in fact, based first and foremost on existing Conventions. These Conventions, obviously imperfect in some respects, yet form a juridical system of precise stipulations as to the treatment of the victims of war mentioned above ; at the same time they provide the ICRC with a secure basis from which to begin work.

At the start of the second World War, the ICRC after much thought, decided to extend its field of work to include civilians. There were indeed indications that civilians would have to endure as much as men in the fighting services from the inflictions of war : they might have to suffer even greater hardships. In weighing those facts, the Committee found itself without the support of legal instruments such as those it possessed for intervention in behalf of members of the armed forces. Individual civilians, just as civil populations as a whole, are without any treaty protection. In this new field the Committee had therefore to depend entirely on improvisation and could only bring into play its traditional humanitarian initiative. It is true, the Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of 1907 contain terms (Art. 42 to 56) which are applicable to civilians, but they are very inadequate. They cover only the populations of occupied countries and leave out of account civilians in enemy

territory. Even in the War of 1914-1918, these Regulations had not served to prevent the tyrannies of which these people were the victims. Over thirty years had passed since these rules came into force : they were signed at a time when acts of warfare were confined to the fighting zone. What significance had these laws now in face of new technical, economic and political methods of total warfare, which tend to expose the civil populations of whole countries to the same perils as soldiers encounter ?

The absence of any international conventions in recent time for the protection of civilians is explained by the fact that, until lately, the laws of war were founded on the principle that military operations must be limited to the armed forces, and that the civil population have a general immunity. This idea was so widely accepted that the Hague Conference of 1907 abandoned the proposal to introduce into the Regulations on the laws and customs of war on land, a provision which would have laid down that " nationals of a belligerent, living in the territory of the adverse party shall not be interned ". It was, on that occasion held that the principle was self-evident.

The War of 1914-1918 was to have a profound effect on this historic point of view. With the declaration of war, the belligerent States closed their frontiers, detained all aliens, and interned civilians of enemy nationality. The ICRC was confronted with a new problem, of which it had received no warning. It had to improvise within the framework of the International PW Agency, a section to collect information on civilians interned, evacuated or deported. The Committee sought to get from the Detaining Powers, permission for the internees to send brief messages to their relatives in enemy territory, or in territory occupied by the enemy. It also arranged that its delegates or those of neutral countries should make visits to the camps for civilian internees. But for all these efforts and interventions, it had the sanction of no stipulation in treaty law.

When, therefore, the war came to an end, the ICRC set to work to find means of forestalling a repetition of so grievous a situation. It put forward the proposals at the Tenth Inter-

national Red Cross Conference which met at Geneva, in 1921, that the text of a *Convention for the protection of enemy aliens and of civil populations of occupied territories*, should be studied alongside the statute for prisoners of war. These two subjects, as we know, were finally separated, and the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 concerned itself solely with the treatment of prisoners of war. The ICRC was, nevertheless, not diverted from its studies to assure a legal international statute for civilians, and it framed the draft Convention, known as the "Tokyo Draft". That Draft was approved by the Fifteenth International Red Cross Conference held at Tokyo in 1934, and was to have been submitted to a Diplomatic Conference called by the Swiss Federal Council. Replies to the invitations were a long time in coming ; the urgency of such a Conference seemed remote at a time when there was expectation of general disarmament, and when the possibility of war seemed out of the question. It was only in the course of 1939 that the acceptances received from the States which had been invited, made it possible to fix the date of the Conference at the beginning of 1940 in Geneva. The outbreak of war put an end to plans for the meeting and prevented the ratification of the Tokyo Draft which, if it had been adopted in time, would have assured enemy aliens in the territory of a belligerent at the outbreak of war and civilian nationals of a country occupied by the enemy, a protection at least equal to that accorded to PW by the Convention of July 27, 1929. In September 1939, considerable numbers of civilians in enemy territory found themselves without any treaty protection, and civilians in territory occupied by the enemy had no more help than that given by the few incomplete and obsolete provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1907.

To meet such a situation, the Committee proposed already on September 4, 1939, to the belligerent States that there should be established, on the basis of the Tokyo Draft, a general statute which would cover both categories of enemy civilians: those who were in the territory of these States and those who were in the territory which had passed, by whatever right, to the sovereignty of those States. With this in view, the Committee suggested

that either bilateral *ad hoc* agreements should be concluded, or that the provisions of the Tokyo Draft should be applied in advance of its ratification, for the duration of the conflict.

Persisting in its attempt, the Committee addressed a memorandum to the belligerent Governments on October 21, 1939, and returned to its proposals of September 4. It suggested the adoption of an alternative solution for the benefit of civilians who, being in enemy territory at the outbreak of war, might be interned : that is, the application by analogy to those civilian internees of the terms of the 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of PW, in so far as they are not exclusively applicable to members of the armed forces.

The majority of Governments expressed a preference for the alternative solution proposed by the Committee, whereby *civilian internees in enemy territory* should be given by the Detaining Powers a standing similar to that of PW, and whereby the ICRC and the Protecting Powers should be allowed to supervise the treatment accorded to these internees who were allowed the minimum rights that the 1929 Convention confers on prisoners of war. The Committee was then able to give to civilian internees in this category the benefit of services in all details similar to those granted to prisoners of war. A description of that work will be described later in this Report. As a result of these efforts of the ICRC about 160,000 civilians belonging to fifty nationalities had the benefit, during the whole period of the war, of a legal status and of treaty guarantees which otherwise, as in the past, they would have lacked. We should mention that a good number of enemy aliens were left at liberty, or given conditional liberty. The Committee will record later the help it was able to bring to these people.

On the other hand, no provision was made for *civilian nationals of a country occupied by the enemy*. It had not been possible for the Tokyo Draft to be put into force, after the proposals had been ignored and when the suggestions put forward by the ICRC on September 4, 1939 had been met with silence. The German Government alone had declared a readiness to discuss the conclusion of a Convention on the basis of the Tokyo

Draft. The civilians of the occupied territories therefore lacked any legal protection, and many of them were executed or carried off into concentration camps. It will be seen further on in this Report that the Committee made every effort to mitigate their sufferings, but its powers were, unfortunately, too limited.

The ICRC had also to deal with special categories of civilians, e.g. *Jews*, whom the racial laws of the Axis countries condemned to persecution; *Civilian Workers*, recruited by force in the occupied countries and deported to Germany; *Refugees*, scattered throughout the world by military operations or political events; and *Racial Minorities*, subjected to measures of evacuation.

In the last chapter of this section, the Committee gives an account of its activities in behalf of *Civil Populations* as a whole, that is medical aid, and their protection against the effects of war.

The ICRC, from September 1939, was seriously concerned by the fact that civilians living in a belligerent country had no rights for *corresponding* with members of their family residing in the country of another belligerent, or in enemy-occupied areas. In order to solve this complex and grievous problem, the Committee organized a large-scale system for transmitting news of strictly family interest between civilians separated by events of the war. To this end, it drew on the experience gained in the War of 1914-1918, and later in the Spanish Civil War, where for three years civilians separated by the front line were only able to correspond through the ICRC, by means of a printed form bearing a written message of 25 words. During the second World War, this standard form introduced by the Committee was adopted by many different States. These messages, collected by the National Red Cross Societies in each country, were sent to the ICRC, censored and then forwarded to the country of destination, where they were distributed by the National Red Cross Society. Thus, in the course of the recent war, twenty-four million messages passed through Geneva. This system, by which

almost all civilians separated by the war were able to correspond with friends and relatives, is one of the great achievements of the Committee for the benefit of civilians.

The ICRC also carried out, by way of the Central PW Agency, a great number of searches for *missing civilians*, as well as enquiries and many other investigations. A detailed account of these various activities, such as civilian messages, formal enquiries, reunion of scattered families, is given in Vol. II.

Finally, the Committee carried out important *relief schemes* in behalf of civilians in areas most severely stricken by the war. It collaborated especially in this field with the League of Red Cross Societies, in the framework of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross. We refer the reader to Vol. III, and to the Report of the Joint Relief Commission, presented to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

II. Civilian Internees

(A). APPLICATION IN PRINCIPLE TO CIVILIAN INTERNEES OF THE 1929 CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR

We shall use the term " Civilian Internees " for enemy aliens who were in the territory of a belligerent State when it entered the war, or in territory occupied by that State, and who were interned solely on the grounds of their nationality.

The ICRC, as already mentioned, had, on the opening of hostilities, proposed to the belligerent Powers the adoption of the Tokyo Draft, or failing that, the application by analogy to civilian internees of the 1929 PW Convention, in so far as they are applicable to civilians and not exclusively to members of the forces. The countries at war gave preference to the second course.

Germany, who was apparently the first Power to apply the 1929 Convention to civilian internees, confirmed this action to the ICRC on September 28, 1939. The French Government gave notice of its adherence to the Committee's proposal on November 23, pointing out however that it would enter on the lists of information only the names of those internees who had given their formal consent. The British Government in practice gave civilian internees the benefit of the 1929 Convention from November 1939, and confirmed this officially on April 20, 1940.

The ICRC was thus able to note that, on the basis of its proposals, agreement had been reached between the three belligerent Powers to grant Civilian Internees treatment not less favourable than that of Prisoners of War. The decision to intern any specified class of enemy aliens or, on the other hand,

to leave them at liberty, continued nevertheless to rest with each Power.

In a Note of December 7, 1939, the ICRC attempted to summarize for the use of the Powers concerned the principles for applying the 1929 Convention to civilian internees as follows :

(1) The main purpose of the application of the Convention to civilian internees is to accord to them the guarantees of treatment which the Convention assures to PW, whilst reserving to the Detaining Power the necessary opportunities for supervision and discipline. This is the concept which should govern all interpretation.

(2) The Convention is applicable in its entirety, except for those stipulations referring to conditions which, by their nature, can apply only to enemy service men taken prisoner (for instance, Art. 18 and 19 on rank and badges, and Art. 21 and 22 concerning officers). Art. 1, defining the scope of application of the Convention, will be replaced by the agreement of the belligerent parties to apply the Convention to enemy aliens interned in their territories.

(3) Articles such as 42, 46, etc., for example, mentioning military authorities, will be interpreted as referring to the civil or military authority in control of the civilian internment camps. In a general way, the stipulations which cannot be literally applicable shall be interpreted as having force, by analogy, in respect of civilians.

There are certain points in respect of which the application by analogy does not serve, but which may, nevertheless, in their substance be of considerable value to civilian internees. They are as follows :

- (a) Whilst Art. 4, providing for the maintenance of PW by the Detaining Power, is obviously applicable to civilian internees, Art. 23 concerning prisoners' pay cannot apply otherwise than by analogy. However, civilian internees who, by the fact of their internment, are no longer in a position to carry on their profession may find themselves in a situation much less favourable than that of military PW, if they are precluded from earning by their work.
- (b) Stipulations concerning the employment of PW should also be applied to internees, although the question probably presents greater difficulties, due to the fact that unlike PW, civilian internees do not fall into more or less uniform groups based on age, sex, and physical condition.
- (c) In regard to penal sanctions, it is clearly not a matter of course that the application of the Convention to civilian internees shall involve, where they are concerned, the application of military rules and

regulations of a penal and disciplinary nature. Since civilians, even of enemy status, are subject as a general rule to common law (which is less severe than military law), it should be determined what law should be applicable to such civilians.

As it is of the highest interest that the Convention should be applied without delay, agreement upon the above points should in no way hold up the putting into execution of the general agreement in principle already reached. This is all the easier, since the application of the essential stipulations from the strictly humanitarian standpoint, seems to present no difficulty. The stipulations, which comprise almost the whole of the Convention, are the following :

- Part I. General Provisions, Art. 2 to 4.
- Part II. Capture (Internment), Art. 5 and 6.
- Part III. Captivity (Internment). In particular, Art. 8 to 22, 25, 35 to 44, 60 to 67 (with reservation as to Art. 8 concerning the condition put forward by the French Government, by which the names of civilian internees shall not be communicated except with their formal consent).
- Part IV. End of Captivity (Internment), Art. 68 to 75.
- Part V. Deaths, Art. 76.
- Part VI. Bureaux of relief and information, Art. 77 to 80 (same reservation concerning the communication of names and addresses provided for in Art. 77 and 79, as that expressed for Art. 8),
- Part VIII. Execution of the Convention, Art. 82 to 88.

Each time that a further Power entered the war, the ICRC called on it to apply the 1929 Convention to enemy aliens whom it felt necessary to intern.

Formal adherence was given to this measure, sometimes with certain reservations, and often in confirmation of a practice already established, by the following States in succession :

Egypt (February, 1940), Canada (May, 1940), Italy (June, 1940), Dutch East Indies (July, 1940), Australia (August, 1940), South Africa (June, 1941), Greece (April, 1941), United States (December, 1941), and India (March, 1942).

Brazil, whose position was exceptional, made important and numerous reservations, which do not allow that Power to be considered as having genuinely applied the 1929 PW Convention to civilian internees.

Japan, while pointing out that she was not a party to the

1929 Convention, declared herself, however, in February 1942 ready to apply it, *mutatis mutandis*.

In this way, about 160,000 civilian internees, for the duration of the war, benefited by the same safeguards as prisoners of war, for whose treatment regulations in minute detail had been laid down by the 1929 Convention.

(B). ACTIVITIES OF THE ICRC IN BEHALF OF CIVILIAN INTERNEES

From what has been said, we may conclude that the activities of the ICRC for the welfare of civilian internees were carried out in the same manner as those for PW. Most of the Committee's chief interventions with Governments referred both to PW and civilian internees. We shall, therefore, not repeat here what has already been said about internees in the chapters dealing with the Committee's work in behalf of PW, but shall confine ourselves to summarizing the results achieved, and call attention to certain features concerning civilian internees in various fields, in which they were shown the same solicitude by Geneva as the prisoners of war.

1. Visits to Internee Camps

The conditions in which visits to internment camps were carried out have already been set forth in the chapters dealing with visits to PW camps.

During hostilities and the period following, delegates of the ICRC not only visited internment camps in Europe, but also carried out 177 visits to such camps in the Dutch East Indies, 14 in New Zealand, 109 in Japan and occupied China, and, lastly, thirteen in Free China.

Thus, from September 1939 to June 1947, delegates of the ICRC carried out 1,426 visits to internee camps in countries where the 1929 PW Convention was applied to civilian internees. They not only inspected camps holding large numbers, such as Crystal City (U.S.A.) and Fayed (Egypt), which held respectively 3,000 and 5,000 internees, but also those which contained only

very few, such as Maramanga, in Madagascar, with 16 civilians and Tollentino, in Italy, with only five.

The visits gave the delegates an opportunity of demanding a list of internees in the camp ; this they generally got without difficulty, but often after great delay. One fact, should, however, be remembered, which did not apply to lists of PW, that many civilian internees objected to their names being communicated to their State of origin, because of certain risks, real or imaginary, that they themselves or their relatives living in that State might thus incur. Taking account of this legitimate desire, certain Governments, and especially the French Government, although agreeing to apply the 1929 PW Convention to civilian internees, made the explicit reservation that they would only give the ICRC the names of internees who agreed to this notification to their State of origin. In other cases, the delegates or the detaining authorities, in sending lists of internees to Geneva, marked with a cross those who objected to their names being communicated to their own country. Thus, the wishes of these people were respected and the Central PW Agency was still able to reply to individual requests for news. On receipt at Geneva, the lists of civilian internees, like those of PW, were, subject to the above reservation, communicated to the State of origin of the internees, who made itself responsible for informing next of kin. For details, we refer the reader to Vol. II (Central PW Agency).

While these arrangements were being made, the delegates of the ICRC were instructed to undertake an extensive investigation of the condition of civilians in enemy territory. They had in particular to enquire into : (1) the different categories of enemy aliens interned ; (2) the regulations to which they were subject ; (3) the authorities responsible for them ; (4) the authorities able to give information about them ; and (5) the requirements of the internees in respect of material relief or intellectual aid, and so forth. The information that the delegates sent to Geneva on these points enabled the ICRC to plan its relief work ¹.

¹ On the question of sending relief stores to internee camps, see Vol. III, Part III, Chapter 5.

Since it was impossible to talk privately with every internee, the delegates of the ICRC always arranged to have an interview with the camp leaders, both men and women, who were thus free to express the wishes and complaints of their companions. The ICRC heard of no cases in which these interviews could not be carried out freely and privately, so that it never had to act in this connection.

On many occasions the delegates of the ICRC took the opportunity to start a general discussion with the camp authorities themselves of problems concerning the internees. These improvised meetings met everywhere with most fortunate results. Thus at Camp McCoy (U.S.A.), after such a meeting, the camp commandant told the delegate that his visit had bettered his relations with the internees and had also much improved their morale.

2. Living Quarters

Conditions varied considerably, according to the country and place where the internees were detained, and the climate in which they were obliged to live. At Vittel, in occupied France, the internees were lodged in the first-class hotels of this watering-place, whereas at Fayed, in Egypt, they lived under canvas right out in the desert. This was not, however, the case everywhere in Egypt; members of religious orders were interned in the convent of Terza-Guiza, a modern building which was provided with every facility. In Germany, an internment camp for women was likewise established in the old and spacious convent of Liebenau, on Lake Constance, while in Uganda, the internees had been grouped by families in bungalows surrounded by gardens and originally intended for Army officers of the Detaining Power. The most usual type of accommodation seems however to have been hutments, more or less comfortably equipped according to place and country. This kind of accommodation as living quarters for civilian internees was found in almost all countries: in France (St. Denis and Troyes), Germany (Milag North and Biberach), the United States (McCoy, Fort Stanton and Kennedy), Canada (Camps 33 and 130, a model camp), Australia (Gaythorne and Liverpool), and so on.

Living conditions (furniture, general comfort and hygiene) also varied according to the camps. Some internees had beds, whilst others slept on the ground ; some had separate rooms, whereas many lived together in dormitories holding several dozen people.

In these circumstances, it was clearly not the part of the delegates of the ICRC to suggest any levelling up of living conditions for civilian internees in the various countries, to bring them as near as possible to the maximum standard. Their duty was a more realistic one : account being taken of local resources and climate deficiencies, to try to ensure living conditions compatible with human decency and not injurious to the health of the internees.

Thus, the delegate in the Belgian Congo asked for a ceiling to be fitted above the sleeping quarters of the civilian internees who were lodged in an exhibition building of Elizabethville, to protect them from the variations in temperature. The delegate in Egypt suggested that sheets should be issued to the internees in the camp at Tantah, and that the internees of Camp 310, who were sleeping on the ground, should receive palliasses as soon as possible. He also arranged that the tent in which the sick ward at Fayed was installed, and which he thought too primitive, should be replaced by one more spacious, provided with beds and sufficient medical equipment. He also took steps to have a mess hut built at the camp at Embabeh.

In Germany, the delegates of the ICRC intervened in order that the civilian internees of the camp at Biberach who were lodged in dilapidated huts, should be provided with the necessary material to repair their dwellings themselves. He also arranged for the sanitary installations in the camp, which were inadequate and in a bad state, to be completed and repaired.

The delegate in the United States had to ask for the same improvements in the Ellis Island camp for civilian internees. Furthermore, in Camp Forrest, the delegate had a drainage system installed, so that the huts of the internees should no longer be flooded by the heavy rains, and had sand and cinders laid down on the paths in the camp.

In India, the delegate was able to record that considerable

improvement had been made in the internment camps as a result of his visits of inspection, particularly in those of Deoli and Premnagar.

3. Food

Under Art. 11 of the Convention, the food rations of the internees were in principle equivalent in quantity and quality to those of depot (army base) troops.

In Germany, and in the occupied countries, the internees were entitled to the same quantities of rationed commodities as was the civil population, but they could not buy unrationed food products on the market. Furthermore, the official ration included a more or less large proportion of waste ; this led to many complaints being made to the delegates, who forwarded them to the responsible authorities, if they seemed justified ; for instance, the basic ration of potatoes was often reduced by a quarter, and sometimes by half, owing to peelings and waste.

In occupied France the rations of the civil population were less than those of the German population, but the delegates managed to arrange that the quantity issued to American and British internees detained at Vittel should be fixed according to the rules laid down in Germany.

In many cases, the amount of food given to internees was found to be inadequate. The countries whose nationals were interned were obliged, as in the case of PW, to add collective assistance forwarded through the ICRC, or to make grants in money paid by the Protecting Power. For this reason delegates had often to inform that Power of the needs of the internees in respect of nourishment. In 1943, the delegate was obliged to intervene in occupied China, in respect of British subjects interned at Yangtso and at Hong-Kong, whose undernourishment had become really serious. In India, in 1942, the delegation of the ICRC insisted on keeping the daily allowance at 60 rupees, instead of the 50 rupees decided upon by the authorities—a measure which had alarmed the German and Italian internees of the camp at Purandah. In Egypt, the delegation strongly urged that the allowance should be raised from 10 to 13 piastres,

an increase regarded as indispensable to improve the food of internees whose health had been enfeebled by the climate.

In certain barren areas, where there was no cultivation, the total lack of vegetables led to functional disease, and the delegates had several times to take action in order to obtain grants from the Detaining Power for the issue of such foodstuffs.

Moreover, the problem of foodstuffs was far more complicated in the case of internees than in that of PW, owing to the presence in one camp of persons whose age, health, and habits of diet differed considerably. One standard ration could not be suitable for children, adults, old persons and the sick.

Attention had to be given by the delegates to the quantity of milk allotted to babies, to expectant mothers or women with children at the breast, which was often inadequate or less than the official ration. Thus, in 1942, at Embabeh (Egypt) the delegate noted that the milk given was only equivalent to a half ration. In Dutch Guiana, the delegate even took the step of having one or two cows from a neighbouring farm brought to the camp.

The delegates also took steps for the treatment of stomach and intestinal cases, which were always very numerous, and ordered them a diet. They also arranged for the food to be suited to the national taste of the internees. In the United States, the Japanese complained that their food was cooked according to the American taste, and that they had rice only eighteen times in a month, whereas in Japan the Americans suffered from inadequate rations, although they were equivalent to the normal rations of the Japanese population. In India, the German and Italian internees could not accustom themselves to Indian menus similar to those of the troops, and asserted their wish to have European cooking. The same thing occurred in areas occupied by coloured troops, whose food did not agree with white people.

The inferior quality of the food was often due to insufficient cooking, caused by the bad condition of kitchen-ranges, the repair or replacement of which had to be insisted on.

Finally, the question of water was one of great importance

in desert areas ; its scarcity sometimes obliged the delegates to take a hand in arranging the search for springs, and the laying down of pipes for water supply, in order to ensure that food could be cooked.

The food question was particularly serious in the case of internees who were left in assigned residence ; they had to find their own food with the daily allowance made to them by the Protecting Power. This allowance was generally inadequate. The delegates reported to the Protecting Power and the ICRC, from all sides, on the unfortunate position of these internees. In several countries, it was possible to arrange for them to receive parcels, which the delegates handed over personally in localities where there were no postal communications. This was the case in Greece, where the delegation had to set up a relief organization for British and United States citizens. Mention should be made also of the efforts made in Free China by the Chungking delegation, which provided food for Italian and German missionaries isolated in areas far distant from the capital. The internees in assigned residence were particularly numerous in Italy (*confinati*) and scattered throughout the Peninsula ; for this reason, it was no small task for the delegates to keep them supplied with food.

The establishment of canteens was of importance both for the morale and the physical condition of the internees ; the delegates therefore attached great importance to this, and did not fail to take steps to provide them, as laid down in Art. 12 of the Convention, in camps where they were lacking. Where a canteen already existed, they satisfied themselves that it was working properly : this was generally left to the initiative of a responsible internee, who enjoyed the confidence of his companions.

4. Correspondence

The correspondence of civilian internees, like that of PW, was restricted by the detaining authorities, under Art. 36, Sec. 1 of the Convention. Nevertheless, as a general rule, the authorities took full account of the legitimate needs of the internees, and the number of letters and cards which they were allowed

to send every month was relatively high. Thus, in Germany and in France, civilian internees could send three letters and four cards a month ; in Great Britain four letters (not including those which the internees might address to the authorities, to the representatives of the Protecting Power or to the ICRC) ; in the United States, eight letters and sixteen cards ; in Egypt, three to four letters and four cards ; in Australia, eight letters or cards, and so on. The amount of incoming mail was, as a rule, unrestricted.

The correspondence of civilian internees, like that of PW, was in all countries accepted post free. Difficulties on this subject arose in Egypt, however, from the fact that only correspondence sent to foreign countries enjoyed this exemption, whereas that intended for the interior of the country had to be stamped. The ICRC had to negotiate with the Egyptian authorities for more than a year before this discrimination was abolished in practice.

The slowness of mail, however, of which the internees had to complain in many countries, was the most frequent cause of action taken by delegates of the ICRC. This was particularly the case in the United States, where in almost all camps the internees (particularly those whose relatives also lived in the United States), complained strongly of the delay in the forwarding of their mail. This delay was due to the fact that censorship of mail from or to the camps was centralized in New York. The irritation of the internees at Camp Forrest was so great, that, on one of his visits to the camp, the delegate was obliged to appeal to their good sense. But the excitement started again later. Finally, the American authorities, as a result of the steps taken by this delegate, which were supported by the representatives of the Protecting Power, decided to set up a separate office to censor the mail of internees whose relatives lived in the United States.

In Germany and in India, the delegate of the ICRC, at the request of the internees, also had to approach the authorities of certain camps on the score of the delays in mail. Likewise, in the Belgian Congo and in British Guiana, the delegates applied to the detaining Authorities, asking them to take all possible

steps to promote the forwarding of mail. At the same time, however, they explained to the internees the great difficulties which the transport of mail was meeting with at that time.

To make up for the irregularity of the postal service, civilian internees in certain countries, for instance in the Belgian Congo, in Algeria, and in Dutch Guiana, made use of the 25-word "civilian message", which seemed to give them more security. In other countries (e.g. the United States, and British and Dutch Guiana) in order to speed up the forwarding of their correspondence, the internees used the "express message" forms put at their disposal by the delegate of the ICRC ¹.

In many countries, civilian internees were allowed, often as a result of steps taken by delegates, to use the air mail and send telegrams, on condition that they paid the usual charges.

5. Visits of Relatives to the Internees

The regulations in force concerning visits of relatives to internees differed not only as between countries, but as between camps in the same country, for it depended in practice upon the views of the camp commandants. As a general rule, internees were allowed to receive a certain number of visits every month, for a limited period. Thus in Germany, internees were allowed to receive one visit a month, the period of which, in principle, might not exceed half an hour; but at Ilag VII (Laufen), the period of the visit was in practice unlimited. At the camp of Vittel, the monthly visit was allowed at first to extend over two or three days, during which internees and visitors had every opportunity of seeing each other several times; however, when the number of internees had greatly increased, visits were no longer allowed to exceed one day. In other camps in France (St. Denis and Compiègne), the internees were allowed to be visited by their relatives once a fortnight; at Pithiviers, on the other hand, visits were allowed only once in every two months.

In Great Britain, the civilian internees were assembled in the Isle of Man. The members of their families who came to visit

¹ See Vol. II, Part I, Chapter 4.

them were allowed to stay for a few days and to meet them several times ; furthermore, married internees were allowed to visit their wives and children every six weeks. In India, on the other hand, internees could only receive visits from their relatives in exceptional cases. It was in Egypt, apparently, that regulations for visits varied most widely. The number of visits that internees could receive varied from three a week to one a month. On the other hand, the period of these visits, which at first was two hours, was raised by degrees to three and then to five hours, as the result of steps taken by the delegate of the Committee.

In many countries additional visits were authorized, often as a result of action taken by the delegates, during the Easter and Christmas holidays.

Visitors and internees generally met in a hut built for that purpose, and under surveillance. In certain camps' especially in Australia, there was a grating between them. Sometimes the grating was a double one, as at Leeuwkop (South Africa). In these two countries, the delegates, at the request of the internees, intervened in order to have these gratings done away with.

Most of the negotiations of the delegates of the ICRC aimed at increasing either the number or the period of the visits. Thus, visits of relatives to internees in Egypt had twice been suspended, in 1941 and in 1942, as a result of military operations, and the ICRC continually pressed the point until they were re-established. The delegate in that country also frequently approached the authorities, in order that interned German and Italian women might see their children, and that the internees should be allowed to visit sick or elderly relatives in Cairo and Alexandria. The delegate in the Belgian Congo requested that friends of internees should be allowed to see them, since many of them had no relatives in the country ; the delegate in Kenya arranged for a meeting of Italian PW in the colony with their interned wives and children who were about to be sent to Italy.

In France, Canadian civilian internees in the camp of St. Denis were deprived of visits from their relatives, in January 1943, as the result of a decision of the German authorities, on the pretext

that a similar measure had been taken with regard to German internees in Canada. This prohibition was not removed until January 1944, after the incident (which in any case seems to have been based on a misunderstanding), had been smoothed over, thanks to the action taken by the ICRC. Furthermore, the delegate in Paris arranged for sick internees in Val de Grâce Hospital to be visited by their relatives more often than had been laid down.

In Germany, the Committee's delegation approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order that the visitors which internees in Tittmoning were allowed to receive each month might stay longer than the regulation half-hour, and that internees who had seen nobody for several months should be entitled to additional visits.

6. Family Camps

It is proper to call attention to the efforts of the ICRC and the work it did in respect of family camps. This was a field of activity quite different from that which was customary for the ICRC in respect of PW; it was also one that gained results which made an interesting contribution in the field of humanitarian law.

The ICRC had been informed by its delegates that the separation of members of the same family, and particularly of father, mother and children, because of internment in different camps, had serious effects on their morale and physical health, and badly jeopardized the education, and thus the future of the children. It had learned, moreover, that the authorities in some parts of the British Commonwealth might agree to bring together in the same camp husbands with their wives and children, who had hitherto been living in different camps, and that these authorities had even carried out this idea in more than one country. Thus, family camps had been established in Australia, Rhodesia, Ceylon and Great Britain (Isle of Man). The same thing had been done in the Belgian Congo and in Dutch Guiana (Surinam). Stressing these precedents and the importance of reciprocity, in March 1942, the ICRC took the

step of asking the German Government its views on the establishment of similar camps in Germany. That Government replied that it had always done its best to improve the lot of civilian internees, but that the bringing together of married couples in the same camp had not appeared necessary, since only a small number of married women had been interned. Nevertheless, the German Government understood the importance of the question, and stated that it was attempting to bring British married couples who had been separated, together in the same camp ; but by reason of technical difficulties, it had not yet been possible to set up a family camp.

This attitude of the German Government having been communicated to the British Government, the latter, at the request of the delegate in London, transferred nineteen German families, whose members had hitherto been separately interned, to the family camp in the Isle of Man. While the British authorities were thus acting in behalf of German families interned in Great Britain, the German Government set up a family camp at Vittel, and moved to it from St. Denis a hundred and fifty married internees whose wives were interned at Vittel, and also several elderly couples. No decision was made, however, as to the establishment of a family camp in Germany itself.

These first results led the ICRC to approach Canada, India, South Africa and the United States, with a view to establishing family camps in their territory.

In June 1942, the Canadian Government replied that the question of the establishment of family camps did not arise in Canada, since women and children of enemy nationality had not been interned. It added that, if such measures had had to be taken in the case of several men belonging to the same family, they were naturally interned in the same camp.

The American authorities stated that they already made a practice of interning members of the same family together, when they were all subject to such a measure. Thus, a small number of families were interned together at Seagoville (Texas). In the case of families where the husband alone had been interned, the authorities were considering how to bring them together. The result of this enquiry seems to have been the

establishment in January 1943, of the family camp at Crystal City, with accommodation for 3,000 persons. German and Japanese families lived here in conditions that were excellent in every way.

The constant efforts of the delegate in Southern Rhodesia for nearly a year and a half led to an agreement between the Governments of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia under which, towards the end of 1944, German husbands interned in South Africa married to women interned in Southern Rhodesia were moved to that Dominion and reunited with their families.

In India, the question of the establishment of family camps had already been considered, but despite official assurances, nothing practical had been done, except the establishment of the family camp in Ceylon. After the revival of this problem by the ICRC, two family camps were set up at Satara and Purandhar, where several hundred families of different nationalities, mainly German and Italian, were quartered.

Furthermore, family camps were set up in Denmark, Palestine, Syria, and Jamaica.

While this scheme was being developed, the delegation of the ICRC in London managed to arrange for the internment in the Isle of Man of the remaining 24 German married couples who were still detained separately in British camps.

These achievements enabled the ICRC to approach the German authorities once more on this question. The Germans had enlarged the family camp at Vittel, where they had brought together further British and American married couples, and a few families of other nationalities. The question of establishing family camps in Germany had, however, made no progress, in spite of negotiations by the delegate in Berlin. According to the Germans, the lack of adequate premises resulting largely from the devastation by the air raids, was the main cause of this delay. The wishes of the ICRC were finally met by the opening of two family camps at Biberach and Wuerzach, in Wurtemberg. However, these camps were never family camps in the sense understood in the English-speaking countries. At Biberach, the men and the women with their children, lived separately, but

were allowed to see each other during the whole day ; at Wuerzach, the same thing applied to couples, while large families each had a room in which all members lived together, the other camp premises being used in common by all the internees. For a large number of internees real family life was therefore not possible, and the ICRC failed to get this state of things improved, since the German authorities always pleaded the lack of premises.

Living conditions in the family camp were more liberal than those of the ordinary camps ; the parents had more freedom, and wherever it was possible, the children attended the Government schools.

It should be added that family camps were visited by the delegates in the same way as ordinary internment camps.

7. Clothing

The States which had agreed to apply to civilian internees the PW Convention by analogy, were obliged, under Art. 12, to supply them with clothing, linen and footwear, and to provide regularly for their replacement and repair. Several of these States, however, were disinclined to carry out their undertakings, pleading that it was in fact impossible to clothe the internees. The delegates, who were anxious to improve the clothing situation which they noted during their visits, after approaching the responsible authorities without success, could only call upon the ICRC for assistance.

In Germany, the British and American internees received issues of battle-dress through the ICRC.

In occupied France, in 1943, the delegates found the internees at Compiègne (Frontstalag 122) in a deplorable state as far as clothing was concerned ; sixty per cent had no complete suits, ninety per cent lacked underclothing and socks, forty per cent had no overcoats. At St. Denis, there were, as well as the British internees, hundreds of refugees from Belgium and Northern France who had fled south during the exodus in 1940, and were therefore entirely destitute, possessing nothing but what they wore at the time of their arrest. At Vittel, the clothing of British

and American internees demanded immediate improvement ; at Val de Grâce, the hospital cases wore old French uniforms. The delegates forwarded long lists of requests to the ICRC in respect of all these camps.

In Algeria, at the time of the visit in 1943 to Djelfa Camp, which held internees of various nationalities, the delegate found considerable need of clothing. A list was forwarded to the Civil Aid Commission, which was under the American Governor.

In the Belgian Congo, the attention of the responsible authorities was drawn, in 1942, to the application of Art. 12, since they were extremely slow in supplying even the most necessary clothing to German and Italian internees in the camp at Elizabethville. As the result, a pair of sheets was issued to every internee.

In Egypt, the representative of the Committee asked the authorities several times during 1943 to give each internee a standard outfit of clothing, to which he would be entitled.

In the United States, the internees were generally well provided with army uniforms dyed dark green ; this dye, however, caused the clothing to shrink, so that internees who were tall found it difficult to get wearable clothing. The delegate arranged with the authorities that the uniforms should no longer be dyed, but marked on the back with " C.I.N." in white letters. The conditions in respect of footwear were not satisfactory, since the army repair shops were overworked.

In Australia conditions in respect of clothing were also satisfactory, and no action by the delegate of the ICRC was necessary.

After visiting the camp at Mazaroni (British Guiana) in 1943, where people of various nationalities were interned, the delegate obtained permission to supply clothing, a list of which he had submitted, and which the camp commandant was unable to obtain.

8. Employment

In 1942 the ICRC questioned its delegates with regard to the evidence obtained concerning the ill effects of prolonged inactivity on the physical, mental and emotional condition of civilian internees. On August 17, it sent out a circular letter to its delegations concerning the organization of regular work in internment camps. This circular went into the question

thoroughly and was accompanied by a memorandum enumerating the main kinds of work to be considered. It also laid stress on the fact that, if it was desired to obtain the result hoped for, such work amongst other conditions, would have to be both voluntary and done for remuneration. These documents enabled the delegates to approach the Governments concerned and to ask them for their views and intentions concerning work by civilian internees.

Several Governments, in particular the British and German, had not waited for the ICRC to take action before introducing voluntary work for civilian internees. In countries where this was already the practice the delegates confined themselves to suggesting an extension, or the recognition of measures already taken. In other countries, however, everything had to be built up from the start. Apart from the undisguised opposition of some authorities, delegates had sometimes also to overcome opposition from the internees themselves. This attitude was due either to a lack of interest, or to a fear that they might assist the war effort of the detaining State, and thus become liable to blame, or even penalties from their own government once the war had ended.

For instance, the British internees at Biberach, Würzach and Liebenau (Germany), when visited in June 1943 by a delegate of the Committee, stated that they would accept no work until they had been expressly authorized to do so by their own Government. The same happened in the case of American internees at Laufen and Tittmoning in Germany. The ICRC then got in touch with the British and United States Governments, and informed all these internees that their Governments had no objection to their employment, provided that the work carried out was not prohibited under Arts. 31 and 32 of the Convention. On the strength of this approval, the internees were henceforth able to benefit without further scruple from the general plan for paid work. This was drawn up at the suggestion of the ICRC by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and consisted chiefly of carpentry and the manufacture of toys and other wooden articles.

The question of consent by national Governments to work by civilian internees for the detaining States was also raised by

Italian internees in the United States and in the Belgian Congo, and by German internees in Great Britain and in the United States. Here, too, the ICRC was able to communicate the permission of their Governments to the internees.

In the Belgian Congo, in particular, the question of work by civilian internees had somewhat special features. In practice, any Italian civilian internee who accepted employment was *ipso facto* released. Once the agreement of the Italian Government had been notified to the Belgian Congo, only those Italians remained in the camps who, for various reasons, would not or could not work. These were also a certain number of German civilian internees, whom public opinion would have been reluctant to have released. The Committee's delegate, with the support of the local authorities, made efforts to get paid employment for them which could be carried out, if possible, within the camps. But such work seems to have always been on a reduced scale, owing to the climate, the nature of the soil, the restricted area of the camps, and the lack of raw material and tools.

Regulations applying to the work of civilian internees varied widely according to the country and the camp, especially in regard to pay. Thus, in Germany, internees employed on camp work in Ilag VII received no wages, whereas others, who built a hut at Laufen, were paid 70 pfennigs a day. In France, work was not paid in the camps at Compiègne and Saint Denis : at Pithiviers on the other hand, internees who worked were given remuneration. As for work on camp equipment and maintenance, it was sometimes paid and sometimes not : if it was not paid, those who did such work were usually granted certain advantages which other internees did not enjoy. As a general rule, civilian internees working were entitled to the same accident insurance as local workers.

In almost all the countries which interned enemy aliens, these people took up gardening. As a rule, this work, which was carried out inside the camps and which provided recreation and diversion, was not paid.

In Australia, Canada and the United States, the internees were mainly occupied on market gardening and forestry work, for which they received a small wage. Delegates of the ICRC visited

the timber yards and places where this work was carried out, and satisfied themselves that they did not provide cause for any complaints. They were further able to note that wherever the internees were employed, their morale was excellent.

In Great Britain, the work of the internees, who had all been transferred to the Isle of Man, was in some of the camps very well organized. Here, too, it consisted mainly of agricultural and gardening work. Internment Camp "P" was regarded by the ICRC as a model in so far as the organization of work was concerned. In some camps, however, nothing had been provided for in this respect. The delegate of the Committee therefore asked the competent authorities to find employment for the people in these camps.

Concerning action taken by the delegates on their own initiative, we may quote the following instances.

In Camp No. 101, in Canada, in order to encourage the work undertaken by the internees on improving the playing field, the delegate himself guaranteed the cost up to a fairly large sum. In Egypt, the delegate sent money to the internees at Tantah, to have beds made by a local joiner. He also sent the internees at Mansurah a stock of wool for knitting sweaters for convalescent PW. The delegate in Southern Rhodesia arranged for the internees in that country to manufacture articles which could not be found locally, and for these articles to be sold by the Red Cross. The rumour had been spread that Italian doctors were employed as miners in Southern Rhodesia; the delegate of the ICRC issued a denial of these statements, making it clear that all Italian doctors in the country were in charge of hospitals, and that, furthermore, no internee was working in a mine. He also applied to the Governor General of Nyasaland, who, as a result carried into effect a scheme of employment for the civilian internees in the Protectorate.

9. Hygiene

The supervision of hygiene formed a very wide field of action which put the vigilance of the delegates to the test. This supervision had to be far more thorough in camps for civilian internees, above all in those for women, than in camps for PW, where the observance of rules for cleanliness and health is easier to achieve,

thanks to military discipline. This field of investigation showed the great advantage of having medical delegates, and the ICRC always tried to keep a large proportion of such men amongst the personnel of its delegations.

In the first place, the delegates had to satisfy themselves that water, the chief factor in hygiene, was available in sufficient quantities. In dry districts, they recommended the internees not to waste it, and gave advice for planning its use in a rational manner. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, sweet water was completely lacking, and the German and Italian internees learned how to obtain it by the evaporation and condensation of sea water. At Fayed (Egypt), water was available only for two or three hours a day, at a rate of 50 litres for each person for all requirements of the camp, which meant that it was impossible to have showers.

Not only the washing places, but installations for baths, showers and laundry were inspected by the delegates. They had often to take action to have the fixtures made less primitive, and to get them repaired or enlarged. They supplied quantities of toilet articles (linen, soap, shaving soap, razors, blades, tooth brushes, tooth powder, etc.). At Mansurah (Egypt) German, Italian, and Greek women internees were living in such deplorable hygienic conditions that, on his first visit in 1942, the delegate gave the camp commandant a sum of 20 Egyptian pounds to meet immediate needs (purchase of insect powder, disinfectants, linen, etc.). Many camps left much to be desired in respect of latrines : here too, the delegates insisted upon the enlarging or improvement of the fittings, and investigated conditions of cleanliness and the use of disinfectants. Elsewhere, the ventilation was inadequate, and the cubic air space insufficient, because of the cramped premises. In certain districts, the delegate had to start a campaign against malaria, by providing mosquito nets and quinine, and having the ground drained in order to get rid of the stagnant water produced by floods (for instance in India after the monsoon, and in Egypt after the rise of the Nile).

Particular attention was given by the delegates to medical care, and they had in this respect to deal with a number of widely varying questions : appointment of a doctor where there was none (fortunately a very rare occurrence) ; establish-

ment or improvement of a hospital ; increase of the number of beds and of the bedding ; supply of indispensable medical stores in daily use ; supply of pharmaceutical proprietary goods, of hospital equipment, and surgical instruments ; questioning of patients ; transfer of serious cases to the nearest hospital or to a private clinic ; engagement of nurses ; organization of an X-ray service for diagnosing tuberculosis ; measures against epidemics (isolation of contagious cases, etc.)

In Rhodesia, the camp at Salisbury reserved for German and Italian families gave the delegate a great deal of trouble in 1942 ; there were a few cases of infantile paralysis, at the same time as an epidemic of measles (183 cases) and an epidemic of amoebic dysentery (308 cases). It was very difficult to deal with the dysentery, and the delegate had to take vigorous action to persuade the women to allow themselves to be treated by hematin, which they accepted unwillingly, alleging that this treatment led to abscesses of the liver.

In the Yemen the unsatisfactory health conditions of the German and Italian internees was improved, thanks to the necessary vaccines sent by the Cairo delegation.

In the United States, in a camp of Italian internees, where there were syphilitic cases, the delegate was able to take all necessary measures to avoid contagion.

In 1942 Geneva received disquieting reports about the serious inadequacy of the medical care given to internees in the hands of the Japanese at Hong-Kong. The ICRC at once took steps to have a delegate appointed, with instructions to visit internment camps in occupied China. It asked for permission to send medical stores and for information as to the extent and nature of medical requirements. The Japanese Government replied that the unsatisfactory health conditions at the time when the camps were first set up was due to exceptional circumstances, but that successive improvements had made it possible to meet a temporary situation and to reduce the death-rate.

In Egypt, the delegates had the internees in one camp inoculated against typhoid fever.

Health conditions were also influenced by the climate. In Algeria, the delegate asked that old people, who suffered from

the severe heat, should be removed to a milder climate. In Saudi Arabia, he obtained solar topees and smoked glasses for the internees. In India, the sun caused much ophthalmic disease, and the delegate arranged for an oculist to visit the camps periodically. Mixed medical commissions, similar to those provided by the 1929 PW Convention, were set up in certain countries for the purpose of visiting internees who were sick. These were especially useful in Egypt, where the delegate of the ICRC saw to it that the medical committees looked after the internees regularly, whether in the hospitals or in certain distant camps. At the Italian Umberto Hospital, in Cairo, where internees of Italian and other nationalities were treated, the Commission examined 25 to 30 cases a month and declared from ten to fifteen to be eligible for repatriation. At Tantah, the Committee came once a month and examined about fifteen cases, of which two on an average were found to be eligible.

The delegates of the Committee had everywhere to deal with the dental treatment of internees. The question of dental plates raised a financial problem, which they tried to solve, either with the help of the Protecting Power, or direct with the Dental Service at Geneva. This Service had set up a relief scheme and drew up two questionnaires to be filled up by every patient, one to fix the required treatment and the other the actual cost. The delegate handed these forms to the dentist in charge of the case ; in Italy, the Italian Red Cross agreed to distribute them in all internee camps. In France, the ICRC sent the necessary dental supplies to the British internees in the Val-de-Grâce Hospital in Paris. In Germany, dental treatment in certain internee camps was inadequate and the ICRC had to supply a great number of dental plates, in particular for British internees at Kreuzburg. The same was the case in Egypt, where internee camps were short of dental equipment, and sometimes even had no dentist. In India, the camp of Dehra-Dun had only a single dentist to look after 10,000 PW and 2,000 internees, and the ICRC had to send dental supplies for the camp by air. Similar consignments were sent by air to Australia and Venezuela. At Maracaibo, in Venezuela, the German internees had been left without any possibility of having dental treatment.

10. Leisure

With very few exceptions, Art. 17 of the Conventions was applied to civilian internees everywhere in a most generous spirit, and with a full understanding of their wishes and of the conditions needed to maintain their morale and physical health.

Vol. III contains an account of the schemes for "intellectual aid" to civilian internees, which were carried out by the ICRC. The Committee not only responded to requests made of it, as it could: it went further and invited calls on its help through its delegates, who, during their visits, enquired especially into the use made by the internees of their leisure time, and encouraged initiative where it was lacking.

In the intellectual field, the ICRC, besides stocking libraries, facilitated arrangements for the teaching of languages, for various classes for adults, and even for children's schools. The small number of internees in each camp did not warrant any scheme for university courses, on the lines of those which were given in PW camps. For the same reason, camp newspapers published by internees were very few. In Egypt, one of these papers had been suspended as a disciplinary measure, but the delegate of the ICRC managed to have this cancelled. Many camps had their own theatrical company, and their orchestra; most of them had wireless, often broadcast by loud-speakers, and some camp commandants even authorized the listening-in to broadcasts from the country of origin of the internees. In Germany, on the other hand, the use of gramophones met with opposition from the censor, which destroyed the records sent to the British and Canadian internees.

In 1943, when a large number of records was sent as a Christmas present, the ICRC asked the German authorities to show some latitude, and suggested that a single firm accepted by them should be called upon to manufacture records, to avoid their being destroyed. Several camps were able to organize cinema shows, paying for the hire of the films out of the funds of the canteen. In two camps in Canada a professional operator was hired at the expense of the delegation.

These recreations, completed by indoor and outdoor games

called for the most varied equipment. As the result of an agreement with the ICRC, the YMCA undertook to provide the greater part.

Expeditions and walks outside the camp can have importance for the physical health and morale of internees, in giving the illusion of a certain freedom of movement, and the ICRC took especial interest in this question. In 1943, it sent instructions to its delegates to collect all information or suggestions on this subject. The few examples given below are evidence that the question was treated in a widely different way by the responsible authorities. Apart from applications made to them by its delegates, the ICRC informed certain detaining States direct of cases which seemed to merit attention.

In Germany, daily walks in groups under escort, lasting one or two hours, were organized in some camps. In others, the internees had the right to leave the camp under escort from once to four times a week. In the diplomatic camp there was an expedition every other day, under the escort of an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Ilag XIII, internees over fifty years of age were allowed to go out freely once or twice a week. In Ilag VII, the American internees complained to the delegate of the ICRC that the walks had been discontinued in winter because of the cold, and the delegate arranged for them to be started again. On the other hand, the British and Egyptian internees in one particular Dulag could only walk about inside a small area measuring 10 by 20 metres, enclosed with barbed wire.

In occupied France, the internees at Vittel could only leave the area of the camp (which, it is true, was very large) twice a year under escort. Later on, the regulations were eased, and even sleighing parties were organized in winter. At St. Denis, the internees had not been allowed to leave the camp at all until 1943, because of its position at the gates of Paris. The ICRC took the opportunity, when a high official of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was passing through Geneva, in September 1943, to draw his attention to this regrettable position. Berlin gave the necessary instructions, and as from December, the camp authorities organized walks every fortnight, the intervening

weeks being reserved for visits that the internees might receive. A member of the delegation in Paris was able to accompany one of the expeditions by motor-bus, which was made to the park of Chantilly. In Algeria, foreign workers of various enemy nationalities at Colomb-Bechar were free in the evening and could visit any places in the town open to the public.

In Saudi Arabia internees were freely allowed to go out of the camp to its immediate neighbourhood. The internees took advantage of this to go for bathes in the sea. In Australia, as a result of applications made by the delegate, the internees were, after 1943, allowed to take a walk once a week. In Canada, walks were taken under escort on Saturday and Sunday. In the Belgian Congo, the question of walks was settled in a way strictly in accordance with the spirit of the Convention, thanks to the action of the delegate who arranged for instance, that the internees at Elisabethville should be free to make their purchases in town.

In Great Britain, in Camp 24, the Japanese internees were allowed to have three walks a week. The ICRC interceded on receiving a complaint from a camp of German internees, who had a space only some 100 metres long for their recreation. Internees in the Isle of Man as a rule had the opportunity of going out of the camp every day, and even of expeditions with picnics and sea bathing. In Egypt, the internees at Fayed were allowed to bathe in the sea, some three miles from the camp. If walks were not possible, internees were allowed to go and stay with their families outside the camp. In Dutch Guiana the women refused to leave the camp with their children, since they did not wish to be escorted by coloured soldiers. The Committee's delegate proposed that the children should be allowed to go out for walks, in charge of a woman internee having the confidence of the camp commandant. In India, the delegate arranged that permits to leave the camps should be granted once or twice a week, according to the camp. Many internees however refused to take advantage of this, since they did not wish to be accompanied by an escort.

In Italy, regulations for walks outside the camp varied considerably from one camp to the other, some being very

generous and others very strict. In Japan, the internees could get individual permits to leave the camp on an application giving reasons, and in certain conditions. In Kenya, many opportunities were given of leaving camp and making expeditions. In Mexico, where there were two camps for German and Italian internees of the Merchant Service, passes were granted allowing them to go into the town and visit the neighbourhood. In Palestine, the Italian internees in a camp near a place where archaeological excavations were in progress, had the privilege of working there under the direction of one of their own countrymen, a priest who was an oriental scholar.

In Southern Rhodesia, in family camps, expeditions were organized once a week for groups of ten families at a time. In Syria, no one was allowed to go outside the camps, but these covered a very large area. In Tanganyika, a walk of three hours a day took place under the escort of a British officer. The internees who worked were treated in the same way as civilians at liberty, and outside working hours had complete freedom by day and by night. In Uganda, interned families were free to go for walks from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Men who had no families were obliged to remain within a specified perimeter. In New Zealand, a walk for one group, under escort, was arranged to take place every day for two and a half hours. The internees of a camp situated in a small island were free from sunrise to sunset ; they were not allowed access to the beach, the port or the lighthouse.

11. Discipline

On December 7, 1939, the ICRC sent a Memorandum to the belligerent Powers, calling their attention to the fact that civilian internees should, as a rule, be subject to the ordinary penal laws of the country in which they were detained. The British, German and United States Governments accepted this proposal in principle. They also admitted the principle, vital to the application of disciplinary law, that civilian internee camps should not be under military authority. The German authorities were obliged, however, to make an exception to this rule in the case of camps placed in areas occupied by their

troops. These camps were administered by the military authority when they were short of civilian officials.

The application by analogy of the 1929 PW Convention to civilian internees had, in particular, the consequence that the camp authorities, even those of civilian camps, were allowed to subject internees to disciplinary punishment, which made it possible to avoid imposing sentences of imprisonment in such cases. It is obvious that disciplinary punishment could in no case be ordered according to military rules. Not military law, but camp regulations constituted the basis of the discipline to which civilian internees were subject, and of the disciplinary punishment which could be imposed.

The camp representatives in civilian internee camps, unlike the camp leaders in PW camps, had very wide powers, which varied according to the detaining State. Very often he had the powers of a camp commandant, and was in particular responsible for order and discipline ; also he had to see that the regulations were observed. In some countries, the civilian internees appointed several of their comrades to serve on the camp tribunal. This was a special feature which had no analogy in PW camps. These tribunals imposed penalties for breaches of camp regulations. The offences were for the most part attempts to escape, insubordination, disobedience to the rules against gambling, or traffic in Red Cross foodstuffs.

Supervision was provided according to the country and the circumstances, by the Army, the police, or by men chosen amongst the internees themselves. The penalties laid down included, according to the offence, detention in the cells (three to 28 days), a ban on receiving Red Cross parcels, on walks for a certain period, and on writing letters or reading newspapers, books, etc.

During visits to civilian internee camps, the delegate of the ICRC gave advice to the camp representatives, with whom they were able to talk very freely and without supervision. They took action, whenever necessary, to put a stop to the very few excesses that might occur in connection with disciplinary penalties.

The reports of the Committee's delegates as a whole show that discipline was good in most of the camps, and that the number of penalties was very small.

12. Repatriation during hostilities

During hostilities, the repatriation of civilians, whether interned or not, was generally through diplomatic channels, that is to say, through the Protecting Powers. The ICRC had sometimes, however, to take action in this field, either because diplomatic negotiations seemed to lead to no result, or because its intervention had been asked for, or because it availed itself of the initiative accorded by custom in humanitarian questions, and thought fit to act in cases that seemed especially to merit its attention.

Here are some examples of these various interventions.

As early as October 25, 1939, the ICRC called the attention of the French Government to the assurances given by the German Government, by which French nationals in Germany were not interned, could correspond with their relatives in France and return to their own country if they wished ; the Committee asked for reciprocity in respect of German nationals in France. As a result of this step, the two Governments entered into negotiation and agreed to carry out a general exchange of their civilian nationals, with the exception of men between 17 and 60 years of age. After the conclusion of the Franco-German armistice, the ICRC approached the German Government in November 1940 in favour of French civilian internees at Constance, and as a result, half of them were repatriated.

In August 1941, when the Soviet Union and Finland were at war, the delegation of the ICRC at Ankara had to look after the Finnish diplomatic staff held up on the Russo-Turkish frontier in unsatisfactory and unhealthy conditions. It was able to arrange for the transfer of the women and children to Turkey.

About the same time, the ICRC sent out a circular letter to all belligerents urging them to provide for the repatriation of civilian internees.

The Belgian and Italian Governments replied that they

were at that moment negotiating for action of this kind through the Protecting Power. The Netherlands Government stated in November 1941 that most of the enemy aliens in the Netherlands East Indies had already been evacuated.

Since the German Government had indicated its position only in regard to special and auxiliary conditions, the ICRC reverted several times to this question, but was unable to obtain any reply on the problem as a whole.

The British Government stated that it had always been in favour of the repatriation of civilians, as long as it was desired by those concerned, and could not involve any detriment to the State. It added that the fact that repatriations had been so infrequent could only be attributed to problems of transport, due to the unwillingness of Germany to guarantee a safe route for ships carrying repatriates.

Australia agreed to repatriation in principle, subject to a reservation that it would not be granted for those liable to military service, or to persons whom it seemed right to detain for security reasons. South Africa stated that it shared the point of view of the British Government.

In a circular letter dated October 13, 1942, the ICRC asked the British, German and Italian Governments to apply to civilian internees Art. 72 of the Convention, dealing with the repatriation of PW who have been in captivity for a long period, but this request remained unanswered.

In November 1943, the ICRC drew the attention of the British and German Governments to the urgent need for the repatriation of civilian internees to whom Art. 72 would logically apply. The German Government made no reply. The British Government was preparing to submit proposals for exchange to the German Government through the Protecting Power: these referred to the repatriation of German civilians interned in the Isle of Man and in India.

The Memorandum of the ICRC of February 15, 1944, concerning the repatriation of PW for reasons of health, made reference also to civilian internees, and claimed for them the benefits of Arts. 68 et seq. of the Convention. It suggested that those of them who were sick or elderly, or who had been interned over

a long period, should be repatriated or accommodated in a neutral country.

Finally, the ICRC in November 1944, once more approached the British, German and United States Governments, begging them to take steps at once for the general repatriation of civilian internees, whose condition of distress was becoming ever more serious. Furthermore, it asked for nominal rolls of internees eligible for repatriation, and recommended measures suitable for avoiding the separation of families during repatriation.

At the same time, the United States Legation in Berne asked the ICRC for lists of citizens of all the Republics of Latin America interned in Europe, with a view to organizing the repatriation of these internees after the war, in the same conditions as for citizens of the United States. Being anxious not to delay this repatriation, and by agreement with the States concerned, the Geneva offices lost no time in supplying the lists asked for.

Furthermore, the ICRC was often requested to provide an escort for ships or trains carrying civilian internee repatriates, when there was an exchange of nationals. Such exchanges were carried out for instance at Lisbon in December 1943, between Germans and Italians; at Barcelona, in May 1944, between Germans, and British and Americans; at Lisbon, in July and August 1944, between Germans from South Africa and British internees; at Gothenburg, in September 1944, between Germans and British. These exchanges were, in fact, part of more extensive operations involving the exchange of sick and wounded PW and medical personnel.

At Goa, in Portuguese India, in September and October 1943, there were two exchanges of Japanese and Allied civilians. The delegate of the ICRC responsible for selecting British repatriates from Hong Kong, and for supervising the transshipment of relief parcels, was associated with these operations.

Finally, in 1945, negotiations took place for the removal from the Channel Islands of civilians who were seriously sick; the ICRC sent two doctors, to be responsible for supervising the selection of these cases on the spot.

(C). CIVILIANS IN RESTRICTED LIBERTY

(Assigned ; *isolati* ; *confinati* ; *hébergés*.)

In addition to persons classed as "Civilian Internees", the ICRC had to deal with other civilian internees who had the benefit of a partial freedom. This applied, particularly in Italy, to the persons in assigned residence, and to the so-called *isolati*, and in France to the *hébergés*.

The "assigned" were civilians of enemy nationality, who were obliged to remain in their usual place of residence, and who could not go outside the locality beyond a certain radius. While continuing their usual way of life and, in many cases, carrying on their ordinary work, they were obliged to report regularly to the police.

The *isolati* were civilians of enemy nationality who were removed by the Italian authorities to small localities, usually in mountain districts and called "free communes". Here they were allowed to move about freely within a radius of three kilometres, but were also bound to report regularly to the local police.

In Italy, both the "assigned" and the *isolati* were classed with the *internati*, i.e. "civilian internees", in regard to their right to receive parcels and also to be visited by the Committee's delegates.

The *confinati* in Italy (although the *isolati* were often described by this name) were in fact political detainees, usually Italians, who for security reasons had been deported to the Islands.

Information given to the Committee by its Rome delegation showed that in May 1942, there were 1,559 persons in assigned residence and 1,349 *isolati* of British nationality. There were also in that country, at the time, about 400 Belgian and French nationals divided amongst the three categories of internees, *isolati* and "assigned".

In France the *hébergés*, or "accommodated" had a status similar to that of the *isolati* in Italy. They were alien civilians who, for various reasons, such as lack of identity papers or

means of existence, or because they were former "civilian internees" released on account of their age, had been compulsorily subjected to a certain place of residence, in which case they were usually given food and lodging by the Detaining Power. They were granted a certain degree of liberty, being allowed to move about and even to work in the locality. On being approached by the Committee's delegation in Paris, the French authorities confirmed that they considered the *hébergés* as "civilian internees", as regards the right to receive parcels, and also to be visited by Red Cross delegates.

After the capitulation of Japan, German civilians, of whom the majority had been transferred to that country from the Dutch East Indies by the Japanese, were "confined" (restricted) to certain districts (Kawaguchi, Hakone, and other places). They lived in communities administered by the Japanese, under American supervision.

In France, Italy and Japan, the Committee's delegates, who were in contact with the local authorities, paid visits to many of the *hébergés*, *isolati* and *confinati*. In Italy, however, the *isolati* were so widely scattered that it was impossible for the delegates to visit them all, so that for practical reasons they had to depend upon short visits of investigation in each district or province where such persons were to be found. The delegates were thus able to establish that, whereas some *isolati* were living in very precarious circumstances, for others, on the contrary, conditions were good, sometimes even excellent. These visits gave great encouragement to the morale of these civilians, and afforded them an opportunity of talking with the delegates and explaining their wishes and anxieties.

As a result of what they had observed, and the claims and complaints of the *hébergés* or *isolati*, the Committee's delegates in France and Italy were able to pass on to Geneva appeals for relief for individuals or groups. The ICRC were thus, in spite of the difficulties of the blockade, able to send several consignments of food parcels and clothing to the *hébergés*, and above all to the *isolati*, which were shared out amongst the most needy cases.

Although the question of relief supplies was by far the most

important that concerned these two classes, the Committee's delegates were, especially in Italy, also able to do them many kinds of service, by approaching the Detaining Power in their behalf. For instance, representations in favour of the *isolati* who had no Protecting Power and who received only a very small allowance from the Italian Government, led to the reunion, whenever possible, of members of the same family. They were also given an opportunity to work, and thus improve the family finances.

The delegates established on several occasions that the *isolati* could not live on the allowances made by the Italian Government, and that they were worse off as regards living conditions than the internees, who had neither food nor lodging to provide for. The Committee's representatives appealed to the authorities concerned, that the daily food allowance to the *isolati* should be raised from 8 to 15 lire, and the monthly housing allowance from 50 to 100 lire.

In the Far East, the Committee's delegates took advantage of their visits to the Germans " confined " in Japan, to hand them relief on a small scale (money, chocolate, cigarettes, etc.).

III. Other Civilian Internees

*(Political Detainees, Deportees, Hostages and others)*¹

As mentioned elsewhere, the ICRC secured undertakings from the belligerents when war broke out, that they should grant civilian internees correctly so termed (that is, civilians of enemy nationality arrested in a belligerent country at the beginning of the war solely on account of their nationality), safeguards analogous with those to which PW are entitled. No Convention and no special agreement, however, protected political detainees, hostages and deportees.

The occupation of the major part of Europe, between 1940 and 1943, by the Axis Powers, put millions of civilians under the domination of one group of belligerents. When the balance between the opposing groups of belligerents became tipped on the Axis side and the principle of reciprocity was no longer a moderating influence, civilians were more and more exposed to the arbitrary methods of the occupying Authorities. The activities of the ICRC in behalf of civilians were hampered by mounting difficulties. Thousands of civilians were evacuated "for administrative reasons", deported *en masse* or individually or seized as hostages. Sometimes too they were subject to internment in concentration camps for "reasons of security", or they suffered summary execution.

¹ In February, 1946 the ICRC, in reply to various questions from Government authorities, National Red Cross Societies, associations and private persons, published a series of "Documents" from their records, which serve to illustrate the activity which the Committee undertook during the war in behalf of civilians, and in particular of those detained in the concentration camps in Germany.

The Committee was gravely concerned by rumours of these proceedings, and in order to reply to numerous requests received from official or private organizations and from the general public, in 1941 it repeatedly approached the German authorities and the German Red Cross for information on the fate of civilian nationals of territories occupied by the Axis Powers who had been arrested, deported or taken as hostages. The Committee made enquiries as to places of detention and to the treatment meted out to the inmates. Attempts were made to obtain lists and addresses of persons arrested and probably sent to Germany. Permission was sought to send relief supplies. On May 20, 1942, the Committee, with that object, addressed a note to the German Foreign Office with reference to the internees in camps at Drancy, Compiègne and in North Africa. The note was not answered. Further, the German Red Cross informed the CICR on April 29, 1942 that it had been unable to obtain the requested information, concerning non-Aryans said to have been evacuated from occupied territories, the responsible authorities having refused to reveal any details. A little later, on August 20, 1942, the German Red Cross went further and stated that in the matter of civilian detainees, the responsible Authorities refused to give any information, even concerning Aryans.

The ICRC was particularly concerned as to the fate of hostages, deportees of all kinds and detainees in concentration camps. Its means of investigation were, however, extremely limited. Its anxiety not to prejudice its activities based on the Conventions, and the principle it held of open dealing, forbade recourse to secret methods of investigation. On the other hand, it soon learnt by experience that it must give up official moves, since the Authorities took umbrage when any question was broached where interference could not be justified by reference to the provisions of international law. To provoke this annoyance in certain quarters was to run the risk of seeing those doors shut, which up to the present had been open to its delegates. The Committee could not make categorical demands in behalf of civilian internees without thereby compromising the whole of its work in the interests of prisoners of war, an activity which it

was able, generally speaking, to carry out to general satisfaction. The ICRC even had to take into account the threat, several times repeated, by the German Government to suspend application of the 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

The only arguments open, therefore, to the ICRC were patient persuasion and its own moral authority. It may further be noted that on many occasions public protests, demanded sometimes by public opinion, are unfortunately barren and even likely to jeopardize what the Red Cross can usefully accomplish. For that reason, in its efforts in behalf of detainees in the concentration camps in Germany, the Committee acted according to circumstances and in close reference to the turns of the political situation. It took advantage of every chance that came its way to get practical results. The achievements were slight, may be, when measured with the ills to be assuaged, and yet were not inconsiderable when offset against the obstacles. Thus, the ICRC, side by side, with the Vatican and various National Red Cross Societies, gradually prepared the agreements which, in the last phase of the war, opened the gates of concentration camps to its delegates and their motor vehicles.

In recording the extent of the work of the ICRC in this field, in addition to official interventions, mention should be made of the labours of finding the most serviceable approach to problems and of getting them into the right perspective. Efforts, too, had to be made to sound the various quarters. Delegates, on occasion had to take action in their own personal capacity and engage in talks likely to disclose the psychological trends of the moment. Their business too was to discover how far certain requests might be pressed without putting the whole of the negotiations in peril. It was also their task to keep contacts alive until the favourable moment came when concessions could be won. To form a fair judgment on its work, it should be borne in mind that the ICRC was dealing with a State that had almost the whole of Europe in its power at that time. There was nothing to prevent it, if it were so inclined, from breaking off relations with an organization whose strength lay

solely in its humanitarian tradition and its moral authority. It was indeed solely by virtue of its right to come forward when there was need for humanitarian intervention that the ICRC asked that civilians interned in concentration camps should be granted the minimum rights given to civilian internees correctly so termed : that they should be allowed to communicate with their relatives, receive parcels and mail, be visited by its delegates and registered by means of official lists or by descriptive cards addressed to the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

Stressing the principle of reciprocity the ICRC claimed recognition of the universal character of its activity, at the service of all belligerents equally ; it was thus possible to put it to the German Government that the ICRC delegates had intervened to good purpose in behalf of German nationals interned in Great Britain, in North Africa and overseas, in the United States, in Brazil, in Dutch Guiana, in Venezuela, and other countries, where their delegates had as a rule been given permission to visit camps of persons detained " for reasons of security ".

From the outbreak of war the British Government had declared its readiness to authorize the agencies in charge of German interests in the United Kingdom and the Colonies to make inspections freely, and to draw up reports on internment conditions of those aliens who could not be left at liberty. The Government of India showed the same willingness. The Committee's delegates were soon able, therefore, to visit detainees in camps under the Home Office, in the Isle of Man, furthermore in India and in territories under British control in Kenya, Palestine, and Egypt. They were also able to visit camps in the Dominions, to which numerous German and Italian civilians residing in the Near East had been transferred.

In the United States the delegates visited regularly the Ellis Island and Crystal City camps, in which a large number of German civilians transferred from Central and South America were interned, and inspected living conditions of the detainees.

In regard to France, delegates visited German and Italian civilian centres, in North Africa and camps in the south of France, at Gurs, Argèles-sur-Mer, Vernet, St. Cyprien and other

places. These camps held internees of many kinds: members of the Spanish Republican Army and of the International Brigades, refugees who had fled before the German advance, Italian and German civilians and thousands of Jews expelled from Germany. The ICRC approached the Vichy Government and succeeded in obtaining considerable changes in living conditions, improvements in accommodation, discipline, rations and hygiene. The Committee made every endeavour to secure the release of detainees recognized as harmless (especially of the women and children), the repatriation of some of them; they also tried to promote the emigration of the Spaniards and the Jews. Relief supplies and medicaments were sent to these camps.

In Brazil, the ICRC had been able to play a part ever since the outbreak of war and to give regular help to the numerous German nationals arrested for reasons of security and held in confinement.

At the time of the mass arrests of hostages in the Netherlands, the ICRC wrote to the President of the German Red Cross on June 1, 1942, recalling the fact that Art. 50 of the Regulations annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, forbids the infliction of collective punishment on populations of occupied territory, as the result of individual acts for which they cannot be held responsible. The President's attention was also drawn to the clauses of the Tokyo Draft, which stipulate that an occupying Power that has found itself compelled to take hostages, must accord them humane treatment and may not, under any pretext, put them to death or submit them to corporal punishment. It was added that, although the Draft had not come into force, its principle might nevertheless be invoked.

The President of the German Red Cross replied, on July 7, that "urgent military necessity alone has led the responsible authorities to take these measures and that, for the moment, it is quite impossible to give heed to certain principles, even though we have them very much at heart".

On August 24, 1942, the ICRC notified the German Red Cross that a large number of civilian internees, nationals of countries occupied by Germany, had no Protecting Power, but

that it seemed, nevertheless, that the guarantee of the 1929 Geneva Convention could hardly be refused them. It enquired what had been done to represent the private interests and ensure the personal defence of these internees before the courts.

The pleas in all these interventions, written or verbal, were flatly declined by the German authorities. It was held that detention of these persons was not due to their enemy nationality, but to various reasons "relating to the security of the detaining State": they could not be treated on the same footing as prisoners of war, nor as civilian internees properly so called; they were considered as "criminals", as "enemies of the State" subject to the single authority of the political police. Always the same reply was returned.

The ICRC was not deterred from making its interventions; it continued to ask for guarantees, to plead the cause of persons arrested and deported from France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Poland, North Africa, Yugoslavia. The Committee were gravely concerned as to the fate of the professors deported from Cracow University, the students of Oslo deported to Germany, Polish, Norwegian, Dutch officers under preventive custody, French civilians deported to Northern Italy, Greek civilians arrested as hostages by the Italian military authorities, Cretan Greeks deported to Belgrade, the Polish Red Cross personnel in Lyons deported to Germany, workmen deported from Hungary, from Croatia, from Slovakia, from France, Spanish Republicans interned in Germany, French deportees arrested in Vichy during the German retreat and others.

The ICRC persisted in seeking for "minimum guarantees", at least, for these hostages, for civilians held in custody and for deportees.

On July 24, 1943, the Committee addressed a solemn appeal to all Governments of belligerent States, urging them "to respect, even in the exigencies of war, the fundamental right of the individual to justice and to immunity from summary conviction, as well as from charges imputing responsibility for acts not committed by him".

In Germany and in countries occupied by it, these persistent

efforts had disappointing results. They only led to a few visits to camps of hostages authorized in the Netherlands at the beginning of the war, and a very few positive replies from the German Red Cross in respect of individual enquiries. On the other hand, in some of the satellite countries, the ICRC was able to expand its work in a way more to its satisfaction and with better result, especially in behalf of the Jews interned or deported in Hungary, in Croatia, Slovakia and Rumania. That will be clear in the chapter devoted to the Jews.

In Germany, however, one single concession granted by the Reich in 1943 enabled the ICRC to increase its practical work of relief, information and even of protection in behalf of deportees and internees in concentration camps and ghettos. The Committee's Delegation in Berlin appealed to the German Foreign Office, and it was granted that food parcels might be transmitted to civilians in concentration camps, provided they were addressed direct and by name to nationals of countries other than Germany. In the present Report there will be found an account of a relief scheme which it was possible to build up on such a slender basis ¹.

Very few names and addresses of detainees were at that time in the Committee's hands, but no effort was spared to secure additions to the list. The delegates, unable to get into the concentration camps, as it were laid siege to them, and never missed a single opportunity of obtaining information. They made contact with the commandants, with subordinate employees or even sometimes with detainees working in the Kommandantur. They tried to get into offices of camps where the card indexes were kept. During such attempts, ICRC delegates were sometimes turned out at the point of a revolver. They also got into touch with some of those who had escaped from concentration camps. They collated any information concerning detainees which they gathered during visits to PW camps ; for instance, it often happened that in factories labour detachments of PW were associated with squads from concentration camps. The ICRC thus secured thousands of names and

¹ See Vol. III, Part I, chapter 7.

addresses of detainees and set up a special parcel department for concentration camps. This department, known as the CCC (*Colis aux camps de concentration*), gradually grew beyond expectation. Within a few weeks of the establishment of this department receipts reached it bearing the signatures of those to whom the parcels had been addressed, and sometimes those of one or several of their comrades. These signatures were the first sign of life from the deportees, and helped to relieve the acute anxiety of their families. The detainee had, at any rate, been "located" by Geneva. Even if the deportees belonged to the category in the greatest peril, those who were swallowed up in *Nacht und Nebel* —Night and Mist—there was some chance, if only a slight one, of their not disappearing beyond hope of trace. This card-index gradually grew, fed from still other sources. Lists arrived by underground ways in Geneva from camps or from countries occupied by the German armed forces, and relief parcels could then be sent to each person recorded.

Thus in the matter of relief and of news, satisfactory results were obtained. On the other hand, it was out of the question for the Committee to bring any influence to bear on the system in force in the concentration camps, and so put an end to the brutalities inflicted on the detainees. The ICRC relief scheme itself was tolerated by camp commandants, rather than officially recognized by the central authority.

During the summer of 1944 the Committee decided, with the object of increasing the number of recipients, to send collective parcels, in spite of the fact that the German permit only applied to individual parcels. These consignments gave sustenance, but had also an incalculable moral value, to which the numerous letters of gratitude received by the ICRC bore witness. To these unfortunate people, deprived of any protection and without any means of exchanging a word with their relatives, the parcels, even when they had been in part pilfered by the guards, were "surely from the hand of Providence", as one detainee wrote. Another declared: "We are not wholly forgotten; we have a friend in the Red Cross."

Details will be given in the relevant chapter on how this

relief scheme worked, despite the inflexible blockade regulations and, later, the destruction of railways and bridges.

On October 2, 1944, the ICRC again approached the German Foreign Office in an attempt to obtain a general improvement in conditions for civilian detainees. The Committee recalled the fact that as a result of various steps taken by them, the belligerent Powers had consented, from the outbreak of war, to grant enemy nationals in their territory treatment on a basis of analogy to that of PW. They also recalled that this treatment did not apply to so-called "political" detainees, i.e. those whose internment was not solely based on the fact that they were enemy nationals; that nevertheless the ICRC had not ceased from interceding with all belligerents in behalf of this particular class of civilian detainees, in order to secure the same treatment for them as that given to the civilian internees proper. The Committee sought from the German authorities that they should grant these persons at least minimum guarantees, without distinction of nationality or place of internment, whatever might be the grounds for their internment or transfer.

"In present circumstances", wrote the ICRC, "all civilians held in custody and cut off from their own country, whose number is increasing, are of particular concern to us. For this reason, the Committee feel they are bound to endeavour by all possible means to assure their services to civilian detainees in the same measure as to PW and civilian internees in belligerent countries.

The ICRC therefore request the German authorities to permit, as a minimum measure :

(1) That the delegates of the ICRC be authorized to visit concentration camps and other places of detention in Germany and in occupied territories, where political detainees of non-German nationality are to be found ;

(2) That the ICRC be authorized to have foodstuffs, clothing and medicaments issued to these detainees, according to their needs, as noted by the Committee's delegates ;

(3) That nominal rolls showing the names and home addresses of political detainees be established and forwarded to the ICRC ;

(4) That civilian detainees be informed of the charges on which they have been arrested."

The ICRC also addressed a communication to the Allied Governments, on October 16, 1944. In informing them of the requests made to the German Government in behalf of foreign political detainees, they pointed out that "to ensure, as far as possible, a favourable reply to the application recently made to the German authorities, it was desirable that the Committee should be in a position to inform the German Government that the Allied authorities were ready to grant reciprocity, that is, in case the Allied Governments actually held or should at any subsequent time hold German citizens as political detainees, that they would grant them facilities similar to those which the Committee was now demanding from the German authorities".

Continuing these efforts, the ICRC proposed to the German Foreign Office, on December 9, 1944, as also to the other Governments, that a meeting should take place in Geneva of plenipotentiary representatives of the Governments concerned—in application of Art. 83 of the 1929 Convention—to reach a serviceable agreement concerning all problems relative to civilians in enemy hands. The Committee wrote to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs in the following terms:— "It is important that discussions should not be limited to the subject of the treatment of these detainees, but that they should also deal with the question of the ultimate repatriation of certain categories such as women, the aged, sick persons and children. There might also be occasion to take into account those persons whose detention in custody it no longer seems possible to justify, since the reasons for their arrest no longer exist." The ICRC went on to say:— "However desirable it may be to examine at the same time the problem of release and that of repatriation of these detainees, the difficulties which this subject might give rise to should in no way form an obstacle to the conclusion of a satisfactory agreement, put through as rapidly as possible, and ensuring to the detainees the benefits in general which were set forth in our note of October 2, 1944."

The ICRC therefore urgently begged the Reich Government to consider these proposals favourably.

On February 1, 1945, the German Consulate in Geneva transmitted the reply of the German Government to the Committee's Note of October 2, 1944. It read as follows :

" The responsible German Authorities, have carefully examined the International Committee's statements concerning the treatment of persons detained in preventive custody (*Schutzhäftlinge*). As a result of this examination the measures set out below have been confirmed with regard to this category of detainees who are nationals of French and Belgian territories :

(1) Exchange of news on Red Cross forms is authorized between these detainees and their next of kin.

(2) The detainees may receive parcels containing foodstuffs, clothing, medicaments and books forwarded as individual or collective parcels by the ICRC.

(3) In the event of legal proceedings, detainees will be informed of the grounds for the charge preferred "

The German Government further stated that the detainees' names and addresses might be communicated to next of kin and to the ICRC by post, and that therefore the drawing up and dispatch of special lists appeared superfluous. Moreover, the German authorities were prepared to reply to individual enquiries concerning these detainees. For imperative reasons " relating to national defence ", permission to visit the camps could not be given. The question of repatriation of detainees, raised by the ICRC, had been given favourable consideration : the German Government was prepared to repatriate French children, women and aged persons who were in Germany, on condition that German civilian internees should be sent back from France to their own country.

The ICRC replied to this communication by a Note on February 15, 1945. They stressed the fact that urgent measures should be taken concerning the legal defence of detainees, " not only regarding penal law proceedings, in the precise sense of the word, but also in civil and especially police cases ". The Committee also urged that their delegates might be allowed to visit camps " with the special object of organizing relief consign-

ments and transmission of news". The German Authorities were begged to reconsider this question without delay, and the ICRC further emphasized that the Governments holding German civilian internees had promised guarantees of reciprocity concerning these persons¹. The ICRC expressed appreciation of the German Government's decision concerning the exchange of news on Red Cross forms, but held the opinion that this exchange of news could in no way take the place of the nominal rolls. It proposed that an identity card (of which a sample was enclosed, modelled on the PW capture card) should be attached to the detainee's first despatch of news, and that it should be filled in by the person concerned. These cards would allow the formation of a card index of detainees. The despatch of news and forms should be done without any delay, either direct to Geneva, or to the ICRC Delegations in Berlin and Uffing. In regard to collective and individual relief supplies, the Committee asked to be sent the essential details concerning places of detention and camp strengths. The ICRC noted with satisfaction, concerning repatriation, that the German Government, as well as the French and Belgian Governments, had stated that in principle they were in favour of the repatriation of certain categories of civilians and detainees "in preventive custody"; therefore the ICRC proposed to these Governments to repatriate the following classes :—

(1) The sick and wounded, the aged, infirm and women and children. In the case of the sick and wounded, the standards in force for PW could be made applicable, to start with. Children should, as far as possible, be repatriated in company with their parents, relatives or persons in whose charge they were.

(2) Persons against whom no penal proceedings had been taken, or who were not accused of any serious offence.

¹ In reply to the memorandum the ICRC sent on October 16, 1944, on this subject, the British and United States Governments stated that they were prepared to grant that German nationals held or captured by them and classed as political detainees should receive treatment analogous to that which the ICRC was asking the German Authorities to give to British and United States citizens. The Provisional Government of the French Republic had also given guarantees of treatment by reciprocity.

(3) Persons pleading in defence prescription or lapse of the grounds for their internment.

The ICRC proposed to make a start as soon as possible with the repatriation of women and children, to be followed by that of the sick and aged. It declared itself ready to examine, in agreement with the Swiss Government, the question of the transit and transport of these persons, if the responsible authorities so desired. The ICRC stressed the advantage of arranging a simultaneous exchange of views with the various German authorities concerned, in order to agree without delay on measures of repatriation and their execution. They reiterated the proposals they had submitted to the German Government in the Note of October 2, 1944 and begged it to nominate a delegate with instructions for undertaking the proposed discussions in Geneva.

The ICRC President, M. Carl J. Burckhardt, taking advantage of the more favourable attitude of the German Authorities, went to Germany to plead once more the cause of the civilian detainees. In March 1945 he secured important concessions from General of the SS Kaltenbrunner. Besides stipulations governing food supplies for PW, decisions of primary importance were made in behalf of civilian detainees : the ICRC was authorized to issue them with food supplies ; an ICRC delegate would be placed in each camp provided he undertook to remain there until the end of hostilities ; a collective exchange of French and Belgian detainees against German civilian internees was agreed to ¹. Meanwhile, it was open to the ICRC to repatriate women, children and the aged from the concentration camps, as well as Jewish deportees, in particular those of Theresienstadt. Concentration camps were open to the ICRC delegates for the first time.

The Committee had for some time made renewed efforts to deal with the break-down of German railway traffic, by improvising on a large scale transport by road to carry food supplies

¹ During negotiations which took place at Kreuzlingen in April 1945, the German authorities finally gave their consent to the repatriation of all civilian detainees who were nationals of the Allied countries, Spain, Rumania and Switzerland.

to PW and concentration camps. The scheme was approved by the French Government which lent 100 trucks, for which the fuel was supplied by the War Refugees Board and the drivers (Canadian PW) detailed by the German Government.

No time was lost in sending out the fleets of white ICRC trucks, which sped along the roads on their charitable mission, the "white angels", as they were called by those they were sent to help. By travelling day and night, they were able to cross the battle areas in spite of all obstructions, carrying food supplies to the concentration camps and even distributing part of them to escaped or evacuated PW and internees, making their way along the roads, and completely destitute. Once unloaded, the lorries were straightway made to serve other uses ; on their way back towards the Swiss frontier, they collected men and women from these camps, thereby saving them from almost certain death. Repatriation was also carried out via Lübeck and Gothenburg by means of ICRC trucks, either direct by the Swedish Red Cross or in conjunction with it. The delegates, in accordance with the special agreements made by their President, were often able to play a decisive part in dealing with camp authorities, and to prevent the extreme measures which, there was reason to fear, might be taken before their release by the Allied Forces.

In spite of the said agreements, however, discussions with camp authorities were by no means easy. Camp commandants, alleging that they had received no instructions, refused entrance to the delegates, and the latter had great difficulty in getting authority to make personal issues of food supplies to the internees. Until the very end, camp commandants made every attempt to conceal the tragic conditions existing in the camps.

In Berlin itself, the delegation managed to secure important concessions in favour of internees in concentration camps, with regard to rations, correspondence and the treatment of Jews. They took steps to prevent evacuations, as well as to improve living conditions, and negotiated with the German authorities the repatriation of the French women interned at Ravensbrück. During the last phase of the war, the delegation remained at

their post, in spite of the heavy fighting before the occupation of the capital; the Jews at the assembly camp of the Berlin Jewish Hospital were taken under their protection; they interceded for those confined in the Berlin prisons; and, in spite of personal risk, protested against any excesses which they were likely to suffer. Thanks to their efforts, the majority of those imprisoned were set free ¹.

When orders were given for Oranienburg Camp to be evacuated and between thirty and forty thousand human beings, men, women and children, set off along the roads in long columns, escorted by ordinary convicts wearing German Army uniforms, the delegation made superhuman efforts to feed them on their way. In giving an account of their efforts, the chief delegate in Berlin wrote :—

“ Without wishing to make any claims, we may safely say that our taking action saved thousands of these unfortunate detainees’ lives. The arrival of the Committee’s delegates among the masses of exhausted detainees, being harried along to a certain death, brought to them invaluable moral encouragement. Moreover, the trucks which arrived from Wagenitz and Lübeck (with which we had made contact in spite of difficulties) brought provisions for the famished and carried the sick and exhausted towards Schwerin in the American zone. The presence of the delegates had a powerful effect upon the SS guards, who were forced to realize their responsibilities. To quote the Yugoslav camp leader of Oranienburg, who was marching in a column, the sight of the Red Cross lorries in Below Forest seemed a miracle : the shout went up from all sides : “ The International Red Cross ! We are saved ! ”

Another witness, describing the part played by the delegates during camp evacuations, wrote as follows :—

“ The distribution of parcels certainly saved many lives, but it should be recorded that the mere presence of the Committee’s delegates in the midst of the columns had a double psychological effect. First, the SS guards being under the eye of the delegates, ceased their killing. Secondly, the prisoners felt they were no longer alone, that they had someone behind them who had firmly stood up to the SS. This gave them support and helped them to hold out for another few days ”.

¹ The delegations in Paris and Brussels also approached the occupying authorities when, during the German retreat, detainees were to be transferred to Germany. Their intervention, supported by the representatives of neutral Powers, brought about the release of these detainees.

The delegates were able to prevent the headlong evacuation of certain camps and to help in handing them over to the Allied forces, by hoisting the white flag, as at Dachau and Mauthausen. At Dachau, the delegate, after distributing provisions to the prisoners, stayed in the camp ; when the Americans approached, he persuaded the commandant (who wished to abandon the camp with his men) to keep back part of the personnel in order to prevent the internees from straying over the countryside in disorder. The delegate then tied a white towel to a broomstick and went out of the camp accompanied by a German officer. "Bullets were flying round us", he wrote in his report. "Shortly afterwards, I caught sight of an American motorized section and attracted their attention by waving the flag. I at once got in touch with the American general in command and handed over the camp to him as arranged beforehand."

At Mauthausen, the delegate, who for the past week had been staying in the camp, reached the American lines on May 5, 1945, after making all arrangements for the American troops to enter the camp without resistance. Before leaving, he handed the detainees' representative the Swiss flag and a white flag. It was agreed that as soon as the representative saw the delegate returning in his white car, he would haul down the swastika and hoist the white flag. After passing through the St. Georgen and Gusen districts, the delegate met a large-size tank. His description follows :—

"When I saw the gun muzzles turn, I told my companions to stop the car, and went on alone holding the white flag. The flaps opened ; numbers of young soldiers with arms climbed out. I made a firm request for an advance guard of two or three heavy tanks and as many light tanks, with their crews, and 500 men besides, to proceed at once to the camp, to take charge, disarm the 500 or so SS men still remaining, as well as men of the Volkssturm. I gave an assurance to the American commanding officer that no resistance would be offered by the civil population, and he gave his consent by radio, warning me that I should be held responsible for the lives of every American soldier. An American joined me in the car and we set off again for St. Georgen, followed by the tanks. At St. Georgen and Gusen the Americans were received as liberators, and we went on to Mauthausen, where I noted with satisfaction that the anti-tank defences had been left open, as I had ordered. I had been right in trusting the population. We followed the hairpin bends of the

main road leading to the fort : the crematorium could be seen in the distance. On arriving at the Kommandantur, I saw that, as arranged, the swastika was down and the white flag flying. The SS were too few in number to resist and were immediately disarmed : my plan had succeeded.

Internees appointed beforehand disarmed the SS men and relieved them of their duties, the armed prisoners now guarding their pitiless gaolers. After a short period of disorder, due to the internees' sudden liberation, the camp again became calm . . . Camps I and II at Gusen, which formed part of Mauthausen were in turn liberated . . . Thus, certain aims had been achieved : the districts of St. Georgen, Gusen and Mauthausen were saved the ravages of war, the camps were not destroyed, and 60,000 human beings were freed, although the Americans had not then yet reached Linz, where the fight was raging ''.

It was only after painful and laborious parleying with sentries, NCOs and camp commandants, often at the risk of being arrested or shot as spies, that delegates succeeded in getting General Kaltenbrunner's orders carried out, for the repatriation of certain classes of internees. The camp authorities only consented to release the internees after a last resistance, and all manner of excuses were put forward to prevent delegates from entering the camps.

The delegate who was in charge of repatriating the Ravensbrück internees ¹ gave the following account of his experiences :

" At last, after protracted negotiations, the Red Cross trucks have been able to remove 300 women deportees (299 French and one Polish) from Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, to Switzerland.

" On April 5, at 6 a.m., I went to the camp and asked to see the commandant, to get permission to be present at the roll-call of the 300 women whom I was to accompany to Switzerland. No one was aware that I was to escort these women, and no one was willing to allow me to enter the camp and see the commandant. At last an NCO informed me that the women would be directed to the cars on the main road, but that no one was allowed into the camp. At 7 a.m. the first group of one hundred women arrived—it was a terrible and pathetic sight to see these poor creatures, famished, dirty, frightened and suspicious—they could not believe they were to be set free, and took me for an agent of the

¹ As a counterpart of this repatriation, and in accordance with the agreements made, the Committee also organized the convoy of 454 German civilian internees from France, who arrived at Constance on April 7.

SS, sent to fetch them for the gas chamber. They could hardly be made to understand that they were leaving for Switzerland, and a great many were unable to climb into the trucks without help. The majority were afflicted with hunger oedema, swelling of the ankles and abdomen, and oedema of the eyelids. They had all been given three days provisions, but hardly were they seated in the lorries before they fell ravenously upon the food. After the first fear they gradually gained confidence and at 9 a.m. we left Ravensbrück, hoping to return before long. After a lengthy halt at Hof, where the exhausted women could at last have a rest in peace, we arrived in Switzerland on the evening of April 9. It was only then that these 300 terror-stricken women realized that the moment of their freedom had come. Military operations prevented our returning to Ravensbrück, but further transports took place from other camps, in accordance with our agreements”.

Soon after this repatriation, one of the Berlin delegates visited Ravensbrück to try to arrange for the camp to be handed over until the arrival of the Russian forces, thus avoiding a disastrous mass evacuation, such as occurred at Oranienburg. Although the proposal was refused, the delegate was assured that halting places had been organized with accommodation and kitchens, that each woman would take with her a Red Cross parcel, that the “Westerners” (i.e. French, Belgians, Dutch, Northern races including Poles) would be evacuated by rail, by the Swedish Red Cross trucks and by the Committee’s lorries bringing supplies from Lübeck. There would only remain from 500 to 1,000 “Easterners” (i.e. Russians, Ukrainians, Rumanians, Serbs) who would be evacuated on foot. The sick women, of whom there were about 1,500, would remain in camp. The delegate made vain attempts to have the Easterners also removed by train or car, or to arrange that they should be left in the camp.

It should be stressed that the powers of the ICRC for help and protection could not be extended to all concentration camps; there were numerous camps and labour detachments of which they had no knowledge, or to which they were denied access until the end of hostilities.

Many instances of deportation, internment for administrative reasons, or summary legal proceedings occurred, even since the

end of the war, in various countries in which the ICRC could not intervene, since it had no legal authority. These show, after the painful experience gained during the two World Wars, the precarious situation of civilians in enemy hands. When hostilities ceased, the ICRC continued its work of relief in behalf of displaced persons, refugees and internees still held in camps, whenever called upon, within the limits of the means at its disposal. The Committee holds that one of its most urgent duties is to attempt, in time of peace, to establish under international law the status of civilians of enemy nationality, who are resident in the territory of a belligerent or in occupied countries at the outbreak of war, and to draft a legal instrument likely to be ratified in the near future.

Civil War. — It may be considered proper at this stage to give an account of the activities, in special circumstances caused by civil war, of the Committee's delegates in behalf of hostages. This was the task of the delegation in Athens, when on December 2, 1944, civil war broke out between the various political parties, which brought about the intervention of British forces.

Until the liberation of Greece, the delegation had been actively engaged in assisting the civil population, often in very difficult circumstances. Reference to Vol. III of this Report will show the wide field covered by the delegates in the allocation and distribution of relief supplies, and the part they played, especially with the "Greek Relief Commission". The civil war soon paralyzed all traffic in the town; the Red Cross emblem was not everywhere respected and the delegation lorries, when carrying out their work, were often under fire. Some were put out of use by machine-gunning, and the escorts had narrow escapes.

As the situation was so serious, the delegation decided to get in touch with the leaders of the ELAS (the peoples' army for the liberation of Greece), to get an assurance that the Red Cross emblem, as well as the service of relief carried on under its protection would be respected, and further, that the hostages taken by the people's army and brought to Athens and other places would be set free, as they were being held in conditions

causing their relatives great anxiety. Negotiations were pursued on both sides of the fighting line. On January 1, 1945, the ELAS Central Committee gave a written undertaking signed by three of its members and the Chief of the General Staff, to recognize the 1929 Geneva Conventions, and to authorize all verification and supervision required, in accordance with their provisions.

It was agreed that ELAS should give immediate instructions to enable the delegates to visit all camps for civilian and combatant prisoners, hostages, and prisons, and to give necessary relief. ELAS also undertook to provide a list of all camps and prisons, showing the approximate number of inmates.

On January 5, 1945, the heads of ELAS gave orders that all women, children and aged persons taken as hostages should be released, and the delegation was given official authority to send them home.

This was a very heavy task for the delegates: it entailed a search for hostages scattered in the mountain regions, providing rations, organizing transport convoys along roads which were nearly impassable in mid-winter, and setting up reception centres. Lorries were immediately loaded with food supplies and sent out to bring the released hostages back to Athens. In each village they went through, escaped hostages made themselves known and gave information as to the direction taken by the convoys of hostages heading for Lamia, south of Larissa, Arachova and Levadia.

On January 16, the head of the delegation and a representative from ELAS headquarters met at Larissa. An order for the release of all hostages was given, except as agreed for those under detention in prisons. Released hostages were to be assembled in certain towns and villages and handed over, with a statement of identity, to the Committee's delegates or, in their absence, to the mayors and chairmen of local councils.

The delegation had also to work out the problem of transport and food supplies for these hostages from the moment of their reception and assembling. About 7,500 hostages were taken to Athens in Red Cross trucks, or in transport lent by the British Army or by UNRRA. The first hostages who arrived

in Athens in the lorries were given the shelter provided by the delegation. "From January 2 to March 9", as the head of the delegation wrote in his report, "we covered 6,700 miles, an indication of our long exertions, of work accomplished and risks accepted with only the car, generally, for taking a few hours of sleep".

During the whole of their relief work for hostages, the Committee's delegates were assisted by voluntary nurses of the Greek Red Cross, who earned the praise of all for their unsparing devotion to duty.

This work was successfully accomplished and the Committee had to thank the courage, enterprise and devotion of its delegates who made the principles of humanity prevail over the passions of civil strife. The representative of the Greek Red Cross on February 2, 1945, conveyed to the President of the ICRC the thanks of the Greek Government, "for the action taken by the delegates to secure the liberation of civil hostages and for their tireless efforts to take relief supplies to hostages who were not yet set free".

IV. Repatriation of Civilian Internees and Deportees after the close of Hostilities

The Committee and its delegates were almost as widely engaged in the interests of civilian internees to be repatriated after the war, as they were in behalf of PW. In the case of both the one and the other, the ICRC constantly urged the governments of the countries in which these detainees were being held, and in some instances also, the governments of the countries in which they were formerly domiciled, that repatriation should be carried out as quickly as possible and with the minimum of hardship, and also with due regard to the best interests and wishes of the detainees themselves. As in the case of PW, the Committee's delegates supervised embarkations, inspected accommodation aboard ship, and travelled on trains carrying civilian repatriates.

As civilian internees enjoyed no protection under the terms of any specific Convention and frequently had endured unsatisfactory living conditions, the delegates were naturally called upon to come to their aid when they were being repatriated.

Thus the Committee's delegation in France gave every assistance it could to the 8,000 German civilian internees, who had up to that time been dispersed in 33 camps, when they were transferred to the two repatriation camps at Pithiviers and Ecouves. Milk was given to the children, food for the journey and medical supplies were provided. The delegation then gave its help in the organization of the twelve large convoys which, between October 1945 and May 1946, took the civilian internees back to their country. It undertook the feeding of these repatriates and the provision of medical care. The delegates

also accompanied each of the trains and on arrival got into touch with the authorities on the spot, so that there should be no delay in the return of these people to their own homes.

Thanks to generous local collections, the Committee's representative at Peking was able to give all liberated internees money, food, clothes, coal and other necessities, so that they should not have to begin life again completely destitute of means. For some, too, he was able to provide part of their travelling expenses.

The delegates participated in the repatriation of German women and children whose husbands or fathers had been interned in December 1941 when hostilities broke out between the Netherlands and Japan. These detainees had been interned in the Dutch East Indies and then transferred to Dehra Dun in British India. At the end of the war, despite the efforts of the delegates, most of these Germans were sent direct from Dehra Dun to Germany before their families could join them. During the war these relatives had been sent by the Japanese to Japan and North China. A few families however had remained in the Dutch East Indies, where they had been interned by the Dutch on the island of Onrust, off Batavia, whilst others had remained in territory controlled by the Indonesians.

Thanks to the representations of the delegates, who did everything possible to speed up the reunion of these scattered families, 453 German civilians dispersed throughout the Dutch East Indies were collected at Batavia, whence they were returned to Germany in the summer of 1947. At the end of the period covered by this Report a few German families still remained in North China. Almost all, however, who were in Japan had been sent back to Germany. At the time of writing there was one problem still outstanding : that of the German civilian internees at Dehra Dun, who had been authorized to return to the Dutch East Indies, but who for a large part were still being held in India.

Much as the Committee desired to do all it could for civilian internees and to get them home without delay, it had in certain cases to be on its guard against undue haste. Some civilian

internees, for instance, expressed a wish to remain in the country where they had been interned, either because it had, earlier, been their home for many years, or because they were anxious to emigrate to some other country, instead of returning home. A large number, too, of German civilian internees wished to be able to choose the zone of occupation in Germany to which they would be sent.

In this connection the repatriation of German civilian internees held in the Belgian Congo gave rise to considerable correspondence between the Committee, its delegates in Brussels and the Congo, and with the Belgian and Congolese authorities. Though, as was pointed out to those concerned, it was not within the competence of the Committee to support the requests of those who wished to remain in the Congo—a matter exclusively for the Belgian authorities—the Committee did, however, request the latter to allow those who wished, to go to the country willing to receive them. It further urged that civilian internees wishing to go to Germany should be returned by way of Belgium to the zone of their own choice. In the case of internees anxious either to remain in the Congo or to emigrate, the Committee stressed that no one should in any case be repatriated before receipt of the final decision of the authority to which application had been made.

In 1939, the German members of the religious order of Knights Templars living in Palestine had been interned. In July 1941, 500 of them were transferred to a civilian internment camp in Australia.

Fearing a mass repatriation to Germany of its members, the Order requested the help of the Committee in June 1946. The Committee took up the matter in London and Canberra, asking that members of the community still in Palestine should be released on the spot, whilst those transferred to Australia should be brought back to the Holy Land. The Australian Government stated that there was no question of authorizing the return to Palestine of the 500 Knights Templars transferred to Australia, but these people would have the option of being repatriated to Germany, or of being released in Australia. Since only a few of the members of the community still in Palestine

had finally been able to obtain permission to stay there, the Committee made further representations to the British and Australian Governments, urging that those members not permitted to remain in the Holy Land should be allowed to emigrate to Australia and join their brethren there. In January 1947, the British Government informed the Committee that it adhered to its former view of the case, which was that, owing to the extreme complexity of the problem, it reserved the right to decide each individual case on its merits. Further representations were being made in London at the time of writing.

Mention must also be made of the work done during 1945 and 1946 by the delegate in Central America in behalf of German civilian internees in Surinam and Curaçao. Though some of these were released on the spot, others were allowed to emigrate to various Latin American countries, whilst a third category were compulsory repatriated to Germany. The delegate refrained from any part in the classification by the Detaining Power of each of the internees according to those categories, but he was very active in behalf of those in need of help. Those released on the spot returned to their former conditions of life and stood in no need of help. The delegate's efforts, however, were necessary for getting authority from the Netherlands and Venezuelan Governments for the emigration to Venezuela of internees who had permission to settle abroad. In that he was successful, and his work made the emigration much easier for many of these people. The delegate also did much useful service in behalf of the repatriates to Germany. He saw them on to the ship which was to take them to Europe and sent a list of their names to Geneva, so that the delegate in the Netherlands could watch over their interests when they disembarked there. This also enabled the delegates in Germany to trace their families in cases where there had been a change of address. The delegate in the Netherlands met them when they came off the ship and, uniting his efforts with those of the Dutch Red Cross, secured the return of their luggage, which had previously been impounded.

The Committee's delegate in Central America also took up

the case of a number of German civilians, previously resident in Latin America, who had been transferred to the United States and interned in various camps, for example, at Ellis Island (New York). It had been the intention of the United States authorities to repatriate all these internees to Germany, regardless of the fact that most of them no longer had any relatives living there and would have left behind them their wives and families on the American Continent.

After approaching the representatives of several countries, especially of the United States, the delegate in Central America secured permission for these internees to return to the countries in which they had formerly been domiciled.

In the chapter of this Report dealing with the internment of civilians in concentration camps, the reader will find an account of the great difficulties experienced by the Committee in securing, in March 1945, the consent of the Reich to the exchange of women, old people, and sick persons of French and Belgian nationality held in these camps, for German civilians interned in France and Belgium. The Committee later obtained from Berlin an extension of this concession to all civilians belonging to the Allied Powers and also to Spaniards, Rumanians and Swiss.

Reference should be made to another chapter for a full account of such repatriations as the Committee was able to carry out after obtaining this concession from the German authorities. These repatriations were made by road in extremely difficult conditions. We shall confine ourselves here to recalling that on April 7 and 9, 1945, three hundred French women deportees who had been rescued from the horrors of Ravensbrück were taken to Switzerland and then returned to their homes, whilst 454 German civilian internees from France were taken to Constance. In April also, five fleets of trucks run by the Committee took 1,334 French, Belgian and Dutch internees from Mauthausen to Switzerland, whilst 1,700 deportees were transported, under arrangements made by the Committee's delegates, to Lübeck and nearby ports, whence 800 of them were conveyed to Sweden in two ships chartered by the Committee.

During the same period the Committee secured the repatriation of 2,250 French civilians belonging to the Alpes Maritimes region, who had been deported to Northern Italy. This repatriation was carried out by way of Switzerland.

At the end of the war repatriation had temporarily to be suspended as a result of the health precautions instituted by the United States Authorities, who quarantined all the former inmates of concentration camps. Repatriations began again in May and were carried out by the responsible authorities. However, the Committee was able to share in this work on its own account by using its trucks to bring into Switzerland some 5,200 persons collected from Mauthausen, Dachau, Theresienstadt (Terezin) and from the assembly centres established by the occupation Authorities.

From April 7 to July 10, 1945, the Committee was thus able to repatriate on its own account some 10,750 deportees, not to mention the German civilians repatriated from France.

V. Enemy Civilians or non-interned Aliens

(A). CIVILIANS RESIDENT IN THE TERRITORY OF A BELLIGERENT STATE.

Most of the enemy aliens or non-interned foreigners living in the territory of belligerent States, and whose situation attracted the attention of the ICRC, belonged to families whose head or bread-winner had been interned.

This class of civilians had complete freedom of action and could therefore send news of themselves by all the means available to the inhabitants of the country where they lived. When normal postal communications with countries abroad were cut, they had the same right as the ordinary citizen to make use of the 25-word family message, which had been devised by the ICRC for exactly this purpose.

It also occurred that civilians at liberty in a belligerent country asked the Committee's delegates to transmit messages for them to Geneva.

When visiting civilian internee camps, the delegates were able to give the internees news of their relatives who remained at liberty. At the request of an internee the delegate would ask the ICRC to procure, if possible, through one of their delegations abroad, news of some relative presumed to be still at liberty. When able to secure such news, the Committee forwarded it to the internee through the visiting delegate.

The ICRC itself, as well as delegates, constantly made use of this means of information to reply to requests for news not only from civilian internees, but also from Red Cross Societies and authorities of various States, and even from

individuals. Thus, in March 1945, the Rumanian Government enquired about some 300 Rumanian students and workers "detained" in Germany as a result of political events. The Committee took the necessary steps, but the state of anarchy already existing in Germany made any search out of the question. Similar requests reached the Committee from the Bulgarian authorities, as well as from several Iranian citizens. The Committee was able, in several instances, to be of help in matters of this kind.

More than once, on the occasion of Christmas and New Year, the ICRC sent on, at the request of the civil internees of certain camps (e.g. Dehra Dun, India, in December 1941) news and good wishes to their relatives.

A further means of getting news of civilians presumed to be at liberty, was to address a "civilian enquiry" to the civil authority or the Red Cross Society of the country where the person was supposed to be. The ICRC made very wide use of this means of information through the national Sections of the Central Agency, and thus reassured a great number of people as to the fate of relatives or friends. This means of information was open to all, and applied not only to enemy civilians or aliens living at liberty in a belligerent country, but to all civilians wherever they might be.

Finally, the ICRC resorted to telegraphic enquiry concerning relatives presumed to be at liberty. Numerous requests of this kind reached the ICRC from the English-speaking countries (especially from the United States), where there was anxiety to obtain news of civilians in the Far East, above all in Japan. After long negotiations with the Japanese Red Cross, the Committee succeeded in inducing that Society to agree, in principle, to such enquiries, on condition of reciprocity, as well as to the transmission of the 25-word family message. This task, which at first devolved on the Delegation in Japan, was subsequently taken over by the Japanese Red Cross. Thus, following on its receipt in Geneva, a request from the American Red Cross for telegraphic enquiry was cabled by the ICRC to the Delegation in Tokyo, and later to the Japanese Red Cross, if forwarding charges were guaranteed; if they were not, it was transcribed in

Geneva on a 25-word form and sent on to Japan. Incoming messages were dealt with in the same way.

The issue of relief supplies to non-interned civilians in belligerent countries did not come within the supervision which the ICRC otherwise exercised over all relief schemes carried out in its name. The Committee therefore considered that this operation should in principle come solely within the competence of the Protecting Powers. Although this was the view generally held, delegates were in exceptional cases authorized to distribute to non-interned civilians occasional relief in money. Delegates in Great Britain and Australia undertook on several occasions to allocate funds provided by the German Red Cross amongst needy German families living at liberty in those two countries.

Besides this relief work, which was exceptional and limited in scope, the ICRC and its delegates did non-interned enemy civilians many services in the most varied fields. The Committee undertook, for instance, to notify National Red Cross Societies of cases brought to their knowledge of destitute civilian nationals, who were forced to ask for internment, or to be sent back to a camp. Among similar cases looked into by the ICRC, in Great Britain and Germany in particular, mention may be made of that of a British family in Germany, which was living at liberty, but in pitiable circumstances, with a sick child; thanks to steps taken by a delegate, these people were admitted to a family camp.

Whenever possible, the ICRC approached the authorities, for example in India and Algeria, in behalf of families of enemy nationality, with the aim of finding means to solve the problem of these people deprived of their support by the internment of the bread-winner. Elsewhere, the Committee acted as intermediary in forwarding small gifts which internees wished to send to their relatives at Christmas and the New Year.

The repatriation of enemy or alien civilians at liberty in belligerent countries also occupied the attention of the Committee. The problem had already arisen in 1939, in connection with plans for the exchange of diplomatic personnel between Egypt and Germany. Despite all attempts to reconcile divergent points of view, no agreement was achieved which might

have served as a precedent for similar occasions. Subsequent cases, whenever they occurred, were the subject of negotiations which depended on the good will of the parties concerned.

In August 1941, the Delegation in Ankara brought about the removal to Turkey of the wives and children of the Finnish diplomatic personnel in Moscow, who had been held up for three weeks on the Russo-Turkish frontier. The ICRC was further able in July 1942, to arrange for the exchange of British and United States diplomatists stationed in Japan against Japanese diplomatists in the United States, through the port of Lourenço-Marques. The Committee was unsuccessful, however, in the negotiations set on foot at the beginning of 1943 for the exchange of Mexican diplomats in France and Germany, and in those of 1944, for the exchange of German diplomats in Rumania against Rumanians in Germany. It should be pointed out that the repatriation of diplomatic personnel is within the competence of the Protecting Powers; it was moreover in consultation with them that the ICRC gave their good offices whenever requested.

Shortly after the end of the war the help of the Committee was again sought to assist nationals of various countries who were trying in vain to get home. Mention may be made of some hundred Chinese students who wished to return home, held up in Germany by difficulties with their visas. The Committee took action to enable them to travel from Germany to Switzerland. The ICRC further instructed their delegations in China and in Germany to assist Germans living in China and Manchuria by taking preliminary steps for their repatriation. They were also the means of securing the repatriation of ex-internee missionaries, such as German members of the Missionary Order of Knights Templars in Palestine and Australia, Belgian nuns in Japan, and similar groups.

(B). CIVILIANS IN TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY A BELLIGERENT.

In nearly all instances known to the ICRC, those enemy civilians who were left at liberty in occupied territory were

elderly or sick persons, of whom many were living in homes or hospitals.

The means of correspondence described above, which were open to non-interned civilians living in a belligerent country, were also available to non-interned enemy or alien civilians in occupied territory.

At the end of 1944, the Japanese Red Cross set up a new message system, based on the 25-word family message, to allow in particular, civilians living at liberty in the Southern Territories occupied by the Japanese, i.e. in the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Burma and Malaya, to correspond with their relatives. The ICRC perfected these forms after prolonged technical study. They carried a certain number of printed phrases only, with which the sender could frame his message by underlining the appropriate phrase. This new method, introduced by the ICRC to all National Red Cross Societies concerned, came too late however to give the services expected of it.

Although in principle it was not within the province of the Committee, as already mentioned, to assist non-interned civilians, exceptions were made in special cases. In July 1941, there were some 3,500 British citizens living at liberty in occupied France, almost all of whom had been previously interned. A quarter of them were, according to the delegates' estimate, without any means of existence. Living in a state of extreme destitution, they received relief officially from their Protecting Power only. The Committee, wishing to make some improvement in their living conditions, suggested to the British Red Cross that the distribution of relief parcels should be extended to these people, and proposed a system of effective supervision which would guarantee proper distribution. The required authority was not however given. Later on, the Committee, still gravely concerned as to the fate of these people, placed some funds at the disposal of the delegation in Paris for their benefit.

It also devolved upon the Committee's delegates, both in France and in Germany, to deal with a number of requests for voluntary internment from persons who had been released, but were unable to support themselves; they therefore wished

to be interned once more in their former camps, and this wish was granted.

The help of the ICRC was also sought to hasten the repatriation of several aliens or groups of aliens living at liberty in countries which the events of the war prevented them from leaving. Thus, in February 1941, the Committee was requested to take steps to bring about the repatriation of British citizens in Norway. In 1942 it was solicited by Greeks, whose home was in Egypt and who were detained in Greece by the occupying Authorities, to take steps enabling them to regain their country of residence. In 1942, also, 2,000 French nationals whose home was in North Africa and who were detained in France by the occupation of the Free Zone, asked the Committee for assistance in their repatriation. On this occasion, a transfer of French citizens domiciled in France and held up in North Africa, in exchange with the other group, was considered. In 1944, the Committee was also asked to act as intermediary in securing an exchange of Italians of Southern Italy, retained in the North, for their countrymen whose home was in the North and who were retained in the South. The Committee did not fail to bring all these cases to the knowledge of the respective competent authorities, and to ask them to consider them with sympathy.

In Greece, British subjects from the United Kingdom, of whom the majority were living in Athens, were left at liberty by the German troops of occupation. Later on, American citizens were in the same position, and both groups were regularly supplied, every fortnight or four weeks, by the delegation in Athens with relief parcels taken from stocks intended for PW of the English-speaking countries. Moreover, this delegation distributed to the French and Belgian colony in Athens relief parcels provided by the Joint Relief Commission.

VI. Special Categories of Civilians

(A). JEWS

Under National Socialism, the Jews had become in truth outcasts, condemned by rigid racial legislation to suffer tyranny, persecution and systematic extermination. No kind of protection shielded them ; being neither PW nor civilian internees, they formed a separate category, without the benefit of any Convention. The supervision which the ICRC was empowered to exercise in favour of prisoners and internees did not apply to them. In most cases, they were, in fact, nationals of the State which held them in its power and which, secure in its supreme authority, allowed no intervention in their behalf. These unfortunate citizens shared the same fate as political deportees, were deprived of civil rights, were given less favoured treatment than enemy nationals, who at least had the benefit of a statute. They were penned into concentration camps and ghettos, recruited for forced labour, subjected to grave brutalities and sent to death camps, without anyone being allowed to intervene in those matters which Germany and her allies considered to be exclusively within the bounds of their home policy.

It should be recalled, however, that in Italy the measures taken against the Jews were incomparably less harsh, and that in the countries under the direct influence of Germany, their situation was usually less tragic than in Germany itself.

The Committee could not dissociate themselves from these victims, on whose behalf it received the most insistent appeals, but for whom the means of action seemed especially limited, since in the absence of any basis in law, its activities depended

to a very great extent upon the good will of the belligerent States.

The Committee had in fact, through the intermediary of the German Red Cross, asked for information concerning civilian deportees "without distinction of race or religion", which was plainly refused in the following terms: "The responsible authorities decline to give any information concerning non-Aryan deportees." Thus, enquiries as a matter of principle concerning the Jews led to no result, and continual protests would have been resented by the authorities concerned and might have been detrimental both to the Jews themselves and to the whole field of the Committee's activities. In consequence, the Committee, while avoiding useless protest, did its utmost to help the Jews by practical means, and its delegates abroad were instructed on these lines. This policy was proved by the results obtained.

Germany. — Even when the German Wehrmacht was winning, the Committee's activities in behalf of the Jews met with almost insuperable difficulties. Towards the end of 1943, however, the German authorities allowed the Committee to send relief parcels to detainees in concentration camps, many of them Jews, whose names and addresses might be known to it. The Committee was able to collect a few dozen names, and by these slender means the system of individual and then collective relief for political detainees was started, an account of which is given elsewhere in this Report. Each receipt returned bore several names, and these were added to the list of addresses: thus the receipts often gave the first news of missing persons. By the end of the war, the Committee's card index for political detainees (Jewish and non-Jewish) contained over 105,000 names.

During the last year of the War, the Committee's delegates were able to visit the camp of Theresienstadt (Terezin), which was exclusively used for Jews, and was governed by special conditions. From information gathered by the Committee, this camp had been started as an experiment by certain leaders of the Reich, who were apparently less hostile to the Jews than those responsible for the racial policy of the German

Government. These men wished to give to Jews the means of setting up a communal life in a town under their own administration and possessing almost complete autonomy. On several occasions, the Committee's delegates were granted authority to visit Theresienstadt, but owing to difficulties raised by the local authorities, the first visit only took place in June 1944. The Jewish elder in charge informed the delegate, in the presence of a representative of the German authorities, that thirty-five thousand Jews resided in the town and that living conditions were bearable. In view of the doubt expressed by the heads of various Jewish organizations as to the accuracy of this statement, the Committee requested the German Government to allow its delegates to make a second visit. After laborious negotiations, much delayed on the German side, two delegates were able to visit the camp on April 6, 1945. They confirmed the favourable impression gained on the first visit, but ascertained that the camp strength now amounted only to 20,000 internees, including 1,100 Hungarians, 1,1050 Slovaks, 800 Dutch, 290 Danes, 8,000 Germans, 8,000 Czechs and 760 stateless persons. They were therefore anxious to know if Theresienstadt was being used as a transit camp and asked when the last departures for the East had taken place. The head of the Security Police of the Protectorate stated that the last transfers to Auschwitz had occurred six months previously, and had comprised 10,000 Jews, to be employed on camp administration and enlargement. This high official assured the delegates that no Jews would be deported from Theresienstadt in future.

Whereas other camps exclusively reserved for Jews were not open to inspections for humanitarian purposes until the end, the Committee's activities were at least effective in several concentration camps containing a minority proportion of Jews. During the final months, the Committee, in urgent circumstances, took on a task of the greatest importance by visiting and giving aid to these internees, providing food, preventing last-minute evacuations as well as summary executions, and even taking charge during the critical hours, sometimes days, which passed between the retreat of the German forces and the arrival of the Allies from the West or the East.

A more detailed account of these various activities is given in the chapters on Political Detainees in this volume and in Vol. III, as well as in special publication entitled *Documents sur l'activité du CICR en faveur des civils détenus dans les camps de concentration en Allemagne, 1939-1945*.

Less is known of the part played by the Committee in countries whose Governments were subject, in varying degrees, to German influence and where special laws concerning Jews had been enacted, similar to those under German legislation.

Through its delegates, particularly in Budapest, Bucharest, Bratislava, Zagreb and Belgrade, the Committee was able to make the best possible use of its moral authority and the well disposed attitude shown to it by a few non-German authorities, who had more or less freedom of action, but who were not so relentlessly bent on carrying out a racial policy as the German Government. In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the Committee was in a position to transfer and distribute in the form of relief supplies over twenty million Swiss francs collected by Jewish welfare organizations throughout the world, in particular by the American Joint Distribution Committee of New York. Without the help of the ICRC, this concerted effort made by a whole community would have doubtless been vain, as no Jewish organization was allowed to act in countries under German control. A detailed account of this important relief scheme will be found in Vol. III.

The efforts of the Committee were not limited to the activities described above; as time went on, it eventually became in truth a "Protecting Power" for the Jews, by interceding with Governments in their behalf and in some cases exercising a genuine right of protection, by obtaining the benefit of extraterritoriality for hospitals, dispensaries and relief organizations, and even by acting as arbitrators in the settlement of disputes. This was its task, especially in Rumania and Hungary, for over a year during the last phase of the war in 1944 and 1945. In countries where the efforts of the Committee were less considerable, they were none the less of great benefit to the Jews. These may be described in a brief summary before reverting to the Committee's activities in Hungary and Rumania.

France. — In November 1940, the Committee obtained permission from the authorities for one of its members to visit camps in the South, where a certain number of Jews were amongst the civilian internees. The camp at Gurs, in particular, contained six thousand Jews from the Bavarian Palatinate. The visit gave a clear idea of the situation inside the camp and and the urgent necessity for relief; appropriate steps were taken in the internees' behalf.

The Jews from Poland who, whilst in France, had obtained entrance-permits to the United States were held to be American citizens by the German occupying authorities, who further agreed to recognize the validity of about three thousand passports issued to Jews by the consulates of South American countries. The persons concerned were lodged in camps reserved for Americans at Vittel. In 1942, when Germany and the States in South America began negotiations for the exchange of internees, it was found that the majority of the internees at Vittel held accommodation passports and consequently were in danger of being deported. The ICRC interceded in their behalf through the Berlin Delegation and succeeded in arranging for them to remain at Vittel, only a few being deported.

Greece. — Immediately after the German occupation, the Committee was called upon to deal with the case of 55,000 Jews in Salonica, who were the victims of racial legislation. In July 1942, all men between eighteen and forty-five were registered, and the majority were enrolled in labour detachments. The delegation furnished them with medical and toilet supplies. In May 1943, these workers were sent to Germany, and the delegation in that country insisted on the right to give them food-parcels. This course led to difficulties with the German authorities, who in their resentment demanded that one of the delegates should be replaced.

Slovakia. — Many thousands of Jews had been forced to leave the country and enlist in what was called "labour service", but which in fact seems to have led the greater number to the extermination camps. At the same time, a large proportion

of the Jewish minority had permission to stay in the country, and at certain periods Slovakia was even looked upon as a comparative haven of refuge for Jews, especially for those coming from Poland. Those who remained in Slovakia seem to have been in comparative safety until the end of August 1944, when a rising against the German forces took place. While it is true that the law of May 15, 1942, had brought about the internment of several thousand Jews, these people were held in camps where the conditions of food and lodging were tolerable, and where internees were allowed to do paid work on terms almost equal to those of the free labour market. In 1944, the Jewish community had managed to secure an almost complete suspension of forced immigration towards the territories under German control.

At the time of the rising, the interned Jews escaped from the camps ; some returned home, and others took to the hills. The measures of repression which followed fell on the Jewish population as a whole. The German military authorities summoned the Slovak Government to make wholesale arrests for the purpose of deporting the Jews to Germany. The order dated November 16, 1944, laid down that all Jews should be mustered in the camp of Sereď, and to that end, that Jews living in the capital should previously be assembled, on November 20, in the Town Hall of Bratislava. On the same day, the delegate went to the Town Hall and noted that only about fifty Jews had obeyed the summons. The rest had gone into hiding, as the Slovak authorities had foreseen, either by fleeing to the country or concealing themselves in the town in the so-called "bunkers". In his concern over this situation, the President of the ICRC wrote to the Head of the Slovak Government asking him to put an end to the deportations. Monsignor Tiso received this letter on January 2, 1945, and answered at length on January 10. He recalled the fact that up to that time the Jews had been spared, adding however that in view of the rising, his Government had been forced to yield to the pressure which had been brought to bear upon them. He concluded by saying : " To sum up, it remains wholly true that in the solution of the Jewish question, we have endeavoured to remain

faithful to humane principles to the full extent of our powers." Official aid to the fugitives in the "bunkers" was out of the question; the delegation in Bratislava, however, with the help of the Slovak Red Cross and, in the provinces with that of the Catholic Church, succeeded in providing them with funds, which were handed to their spokesmen, and which allowed them to support life during the last months of the war.

The Committee's representative was unable to secure permission to visit the camp of Sered. He was, however, allowed to enter the camp of Marienka, where Jews of alien nationality were interned.

Croatia. — From May 1943 to the end of 1945, the delegation gave aid to the Jewish community of Zagreb, to whom on behalf of the Joint Committee of New York, it paid out an average amount of 20,000 Swiss francs monthly. It also made available to it considerable quantities of food supplies, clothing and medical stores.

In October 1944, the German authorities, on the pattern of measures taken in the neighbouring countries, imprisoned the Jews of Zagreb, and seized their food stores. The delegation at once made representations to the Croat Government, and secured the return of these stores.

Hungary. — As in Slovakia, the Jews were relatively spared, in so far as the local government retained a certain freedom of action. But when German pressure was reasserted, from March 1944 onwards, the position of the Jews became critical. The replacement in October 1944, of Horthy's Government by one in bondage to Germany, provoked a violent crisis; executions robberies, deportations, forced labour, imprisonments—such was the lot of the Jewish population, which suffered cruelly and lost many killed, especially in the provinces. It was at this point that the Committee, to alleviate these sufferings, took action with vigour and authority. At the same time the aid prompted by the King of Sweden, was given with considerable courage and success by the Swedish Legation in Budapest, helped by some members of the Swedish Red Cross.

Until March 1944, Jews who had the privilege of visas for Palestine were free to leave Hungary. On March 18, 1944, Hitler summoned the Regent, Admiral Horthy, to his headquarters. He expressed his indignation that "in Hungary very nearly a million Jews were able to live in freedom and without restrictions". Even before the Regent had returned to Budapest, German troops had begun the occupation of Hungary in order to prevent her from abandoning her alliance with Germany. This occupation forced upon the Head of the Hungarian State a new government that was far more dependent on German authority than the one preceding it. Emigration of the Jews was straightway suspended, and the persecutions began.

This was a matter of the gravest concern to the ICRC. The President appealed to the Regent, Admiral Horthy: "The matters brought to our knowledge seem to us", he wrote on July 5, 1944, "so utterly contrary to the chivalrous traditions of the great Hungarian people that it is difficult for us to credit even a tithe of the information we are receiving. In the name of the ICRC, I venture to beg Your Highness to give instructions enabling us to reply to these rumours and accusations." The Regent replied, on August 12: "It is unfortunately not within my power to prevent inhuman acts which no one condemns more severely than my people, whose thoughts and feelings are chivalrous. I have instructed the Hungarian Government to take up the settlement of the Jewish question in Budapest. It is to be hoped that this statement will not give rise to serious complications..."

In the spirit of this reply, the Hungarian authorities allowed the delegate in Budapest to affix shields on the camps and internment buildings for the Jews, conferring on them the protection of the Red Cross. If the use of these shields (hardly compatible, moreover, with the precise terms of the Geneva Convention) was not more extensive, this is due to the fact that the Jewish Senate of Budapest was of opinion that the measure would doubtless lose its effectiveness if generally applied.

The Hungarian Government, furthermore, showed themselves

willing to favour a resumption of Jewish emigration. The Committee got in touch with the British and United States Governments as a matter of extreme urgency and, during August, obtained a joint statement from these two Governments declaring their desire to give support by every means to the emigration of Jews from Hungary.

To this end, the Committee was requested to transmit the following message to Budapest from the United States Government : " The United States Government has been advised by the ICRC of the Hungarian Government's willingness to permit certain categories of refugees to emigrate from Hungary... The Government of the United States, taking into account the humanitarian considerations involved as regards the Jews in Hungary, now specifically repeats its assurance that arrangements will be made by it for the care of all Jews who in the present circumstances are allowed to leave Hungary and who reach the territory of the United Nations or neutral countries, and that it will find for such people temporary havens of refuge where they may live in safety. The Governments of neutral countries have been advised of these assurances and have been requested to permit the entry into their territory of Jews from Hungary who may reach their frontiers."

On October 8, the Hungarian authorities, in conformity with the undertaking given to the Committee, announced the final suspension of deportations and made known that the Kistarcea Camp for Jewish intellectuals, doctors and engineers, had been broken up and the internees released.

The hope raised by this statement was short-lived. A few days later the full tide of the great tribulations of the Hungarian Jews was to set in. In view of the setbacks of the German Army, Admiral Horthy had decided to sever his country's connection with Germany. On October 15, he asked the Allied Powers for an armistice for Hungary. This proclamation had an immense effect amongst the Jews, who were ardent in their demonstrations against the occupying Power. Although the German Army was in retreat both in Eastern and Western Europe, it had still a firm foothold in Hungary. The Regent failed in his plan and was arrested. Hungarian supporters of

the Germans seized power and set about a repression, increasing in severity as the fighting zone came nearer, placing Budapest in a state of siege. It is alleged that shots were fired from Jewish houses on the German troops ; however that may be, repression was centred on the Jews. It was immediately decided to remove them from Budapest and to confiscate their property. Sixty thousand Jews fit for work were to be sent to Germany, on foot, in parties of one thousand, by way of Vienna. Moreover, among the able-bodied, men between sixteen and sixty, and women between fourteen and forty were commandeered for forced labour in building fortifications in Hungary. The rest of the Jewish population, including the disabled and sick, was confined in four or five ghettos near Budapest. The only Jews to escape evacuation were those in possession of passports with visas for Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal or Spain.

These measures were accompanied, at the outset, by brutalities and thefts against which the delegate immediately protested. The Ministry of the Interior, giving heed to this action, issued a decree forbidding pillage as from October 20. Meanwhile, the delegation was giving refuge to the members of the Jewish Senate of Budapest. Since their position was apparently threatened, the delegate renewed his appeals to the German authorities, as to the Hungarian Government and on October 29, the wireless announced that the ICRC buildings were granted extritoriality, similar to that of the Legations.

His position thus strengthened, the delegate devoted himself with all the more assurance to the relief work he had courageously undertaken in behalf of the Jews. " It is hard ", he wrote, " to imagine the difficulty I had in holding out against a gang in whose hands the power lay, and at a time when disorder, murder and aggression were the order of the day, to compel it still to show some restraint and to observe the respect due to the Red Cross emblem..."

The fate of children whose parents had been deported to the labour camps was especially tragic. The delegate succeeded, with the help of the " Jo Pasztor " organization, in setting up some twenty homes in which these children, accompanied in

some cases by their mothers, could be accommodated. The hospital staff consisted of trained nurses and of Jews, whose employment in these homes ensured them a certificate of protection similar to those which the delegate issued to his fellow workers.

The Committee's representatives also opened soup-kitchens, each able to provide about a hundred hot meals a day. Reception and accommodation centres were set up, as well as hospitals with children's and maternity wards, and a first aid station open to the public "without distinction of race or creed". Furthermore, the delegate issued thirty thousand letters of protection, which although without any legal basis, were respected by the authorities and exempted their holders from compulsory labour.

In November, one hundred thousand Jews poured into Budapest from the provinces. The Government decided to shut them up in a ghetto, and with them the Jews who had remained in Budapest, in particular the children sheltered in the Red Cross homes. "I considered that my main task", wrote the delegate, "lay in ensuring that this ghetto life was at least as bearable as possible. I had incredible difficulty in obtaining from the Hungarian Nazis, in the course of daily bargaining, conditions and concession which would ensure to some degree the means to exist for those in the ghetto. Continual interviews took place with the Jewish Senate on the one hand, and with the town administration on the other, to ensure at least minimum food supplies for the ghetto at a time when all traffic had stopped, owing to the constant bombing, and provisioning was becoming more and more difficult." The delegate secured that the Jews' rations should be fixed at 920 calories, i.e. two thirds of the minimum Hungarian prison fare. Later on it was possible to make a slight increase of this figure, thanks to the issue of relief supplies.

In spite of the delegate's efforts, the children transferred to the ghetto had been put sixty in a room in premises which it had been impossible either to clean or to disinfect. Pleading the danger of epidemics, he succeeded in getting the children

inspected by a committee who had authority to make some decision on their situation. This health inspection allowed 500 of the 800 children examined to be sent back to the homes from which they had been removed, and for 300 to be placed in hospitals. The other children did not leave the ghetto, but were taken care of there by relatives or friends. Furthermore, the Delegation sent into the ghetto, with permission of the Government, five persons instructed to furnish regular and detailed reports on each child's need of food and clothing. Finally, on the initiative of the delegate, one thousand orphans selected "without distinction of race or religion" were assembled in the Abbey of Panonalma, a Benedictine monastery placed at the delegate's disposal by the Bishop of Győr. This refuge, under the protection of the Red Cross, was respected by the German and Hungarian troops in retreat, and also by the Soviet Army.

The devotion and generosity of the Bishop of Győr were a fruitful help to the delegate in the relief work he had undertaken. His task was to improve the food and shelter of the convoys of Jews who were being deported to labour camps in Germany and compelled to do stages of twenty-five to thirty kilometres a day on foot. The Bishop organized a relief centre en route, which he financed and which was administered by representatives of the Committee. It gave shelter from bad weather, for a few hours at least, to thousands of Jews during their terrible exodus. The "transport groups" of the delegation issued food to them on the road, paid the peasants to carry the weakest, fifteen to twenty at a time, in their carts, gave medical attention to the sick and dispensed medical supplies.

On November 12, a new threat hung over the hospitals protected by the Red Cross emblem, which the police had searched with an order to turn out the Jews. The delegate, on the strength of the authority he had been granted, protested to the Government. As a result, the police authorities were instructed not to proceed with the evictions from the hospitals.

It must be apparent what difficulties and dangers were encountered at every turn by the Committee's representatives in a town subject to the most violent bombardments. They were supported in their courageous work by the untiring devotion

to duty of the members of the Jewish Senate, and by the equally generous activity of the representatives of the two main protecting Powers, Switzerland and Sweden.

As soon as Budapest was liberated, the delegate and the local Jewish organizations established, with the funds of the New York Joint Committee stocks of foodstuffs and of the most necessary medical supplies. The Russian military authorities had ordered all foreigners to leave Budapest. When our delegate had to go, a Hungarian minister paid him the tribute of stating that he had, in a time of historic crisis, succeeded in making the capital a "protectorate of Geneva".

Rumania. — The delegate's part was a very important one, owing to the opportunities there were in that country for the purchase of foodstuffs. Financial aid and relief in kind could be sent from Bucharest to Poland and neighbouring countries. The Committee came to an agreement concerning relief in Rumania itself with the National Red Cross there, to whom our delegate handed funds for the purchase of goods. It should be emphasized that wealthy Rumanian Jews contributed in large measure towards assisting their co-religionists in need. From 1943, the Committee's work in Rumania was made easier by the fact that the delegate had been able to inspire the Rumanian Government with trust.

During the period in September 1940, when the "Iron Guard", supported by the Gestapo and the German SS, had seized power, the Jews had been subjected to persecution and deportation to death camps. Later, under the dictatorship of Marshal Antonescu, they met with less severity. Special understanding was shown by the Vice-president of the Council, Mr. Mihai Antonescu, who was entrusted with the settlement of the Jewish question. "The Rumanian Government", he wrote to the delegate in Bucharest, "repudiates any material solution contrary to civilized custom and in defiance of the Christian spirit which dominates the conscience of the Rumanian people."

In December 1943 Mr. Mihai Antonescu had an interview with this delegate which led to making later activities of the Com-

mittee in behalf of Jews far easier. This talk bore mainly on the case of Jews deported beyond the Dniester to the Ukraine, who were natives of Bessarabia and the Bukovina. These provinces had been returned to Rumania after the first World War, and came again under Soviet power by the terms of the Soviet-German treaty at the beginning of the Second War. After the reshuffle in 1941, Rumania, who had become Germany's ally against the USSR, reoccupied these two provinces. The Jews, whom the Rumanians considered guilty of having welcomed too easily a return to Russian allegiance, were then deported. The Rumanian Government's plan, drawn up in agreement with Germany, seems to have been to settle these Jews on lands in the region of the Sea of Azov. This could not be carried out, however, unless the USSR were defeated. In the light of the Russian victories, the Rumanian Government decided, towards the close of 1943, to repatriate the survivors of this deplorable migration, the numbers of which had fallen from 200,000 to 78,000. Mr. Mihai Antonescu welcomed the opportunity of the approaches made by the delegate in Bucharest, to entrust him with a mission of enquiry into the means of carrying out this repatriation, and authorized him to tour Transnistria to distribute clothing and relief to these unfortunate people. Furthermore, the delegate succeeded in getting an assurance that the Czernowitz Jews, the only ones still compelled to wear the yellow star, should be exempted, as this badge exposed them to the brutality of German troops passing through. Finally, it was agreed that Red Cross purchases might be freely made at the official rates.

When the delegate saw the Vice-president of the Council again on his return, he drew his attention specially to the plight of the children who had lost their parents and were left abandoned in Transnistria. Mr. Mihai Antonescu promised to allow 150 children to leave each week for Palestine or elsewhere, if the Committee could arrange their journey. Three months later, the Rumanian Government offered two recently-built first-class steamers, the *Transilvania* and the *Bessarabia*, then held in Turkish waters, and suggested the Committee should buy them, reserving to Rumania the option of repurchase,

for use as transports for emigrants under the Swiss flag. Switzerland, as the protecting Power for British interests, could in fact be considered as the protecting Power for Jews bound for Palestine, since these Jews were to become on arrival assimilated to British nationals.

Up to that time, the remedy of emigration had been no more than a meagre palliative for the sufferings of the Jews. Bulgaria had shut her frontiers to emigrants travelling on a collective passport, and only Jews under eighteen years of age or over forty-five had been able to reach Turkey, under individual permits. Transport by sea from Rumanian ports would have afforded the best means of emigration. But besides the difficulties met with by the Jews in leaving, account had to be taken of the political problem raised for the British authorities by an influx of Jews, considered as intruders by the majority of the local population of a territory under British mandate. The first vessel, the *Struma*, which left Constanza for Palestine independently of any action by the Committee, at the beginning of 1942, had been detained at Istanbul owing to engine trouble, and was subsequently obliged to sail again for Rumania, as it was impossible to obtain the necessary permits to continue on its route. It was wrecked, and 750 emigrants were drowned. This pioneer expedition, ending so disastrously, was a lesson in the need of prudence.

The Committee was asked to grant the protection of the Red Cross emblem to emigrant transports and would have consented to this, on the basis of a very liberal interpretation of the provisions of the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907, which govern the use of hospital ships, whilst reckoning too that cargo-boats sailing under their control and carrying relief supplies for PW or civilian internees were covered by the Red Cross emblem. However, it would have wished to do this in agreement with all the Powers concerned. Therefore, the Committee made its consent conditional on the following terms. The transport organizations should charter neutral vessels which would be accompanied by the Committee's representative, and would be used exclusively for the transport of emigrants. The ships were not to sail before obtaining safe-conducts from all the

belligerents concerned, as well as their agreement as to the route to be followed.

These conditions were unfortunately never obtained. The *Bellacita*, however, was authorized by Rumania to carry out a daily service for the transport of Jewish children from Constanza or Mangalia to Istambul, and sailed under the protection of the Rumanian Red Cross, the Committee having notified all belligerents of these voyages.

The delegate in Bucharest was faced with a very grave decision when the question arose of embarking Jews for Palestine on two Bulgarian vessels, the *Milka* and the *Maritza*, both chartered by Zionist organizations. There was reason to fear the same fate for them as for those who sailed in the *Struma*. Moreover, the heads of Jewish organizations did not agree as to the names for the list of emigrants, and the Rumanian authorities applied to the Committee to arbitrate. The delegate confined himself to a check of the emigration permits and thus aided their departure. They arrived safely in Istambul a few days later. In August 1944, the Committee finally agreed that vessels carrying emigrants might display the Red Cross emblem, even in the absence of certain of the conditions which had been laid down.

On August 23, the King of Rumania took advantage of the retreat of the German troops to put an end to the dictatorship of Marshal Antonescu, and to enter into armistice negotiations with the Allies. The racial laws were thereupon abolished in Rumania.

The Committee continued their relief work in behalf of Jews, however, until the close of hostilities.

In its report of December 1944, the delegation in Bucharest stated that, thanks to consignments from the Joint Committee of New York and to collections made on the spot, it had been able to come to the help of 183,000 Rumanian Jews, comprising : 17,000 deportees repatriated from Transnistria ; 30,000 men liberated from forced labour with their families (90,000 persons) ; 20,000 evacuees from small towns and villages ; 10,000 evacuees from the war zone ; 20,000 homeless persons, as a result of bombardments ; 20,000 workmen and officials dismissed from

their employment ; and 6,000 Hungarians who had succeeded in escaping deportation and were found in Northern Transylvania.

Tribute was paid to this humanitarian work by the President of the American Union of Rumanian Jews. He wrote, in March 1945, to the Committee's delegate in Washington as follows :

" The work of the International Red Cross in helping the Jewish population in Rumania, and the Jews transported to Transnistria has been appreciated at its true worth not only by Dr. Safran, the Chief Rabbi in Rumania and the Jewish Community of Rumania, but also by the many thousands of members of our Union whose own relatives benefited by that help. The International Red Cross Committee has rendered truly invaluable service to our people in Rumania."

Mr. Joseph C. Hyman, Vice-President of the American Joint Distribution Committee of New York, had already made public the debt of gratitude due to the International Red Cross. In an article published in the journal " News " on February 16, 1945, under the title " The Joint Distribution Committee lauds International Red Cross Co-operation ", he is quoted as follows : " Thousands of Jews in newly liberated lands and in German concentration camps owe their lives to the sanctuary and the help given them by the International Red Cross... In those parts of the world where J.D.C., major American agency for the rescue and relief of distressed Jews overseas, cannot itself work directly, we know we can count on the International Red Cross... to act for us in bringing aid to suffering Jewry."

(B). CIVILIAN WORKERS

The welfare of civilian workers who were conscripted by Germany in the occupied countries and taken to German territory, raised some very difficult problems. These persons were not protected by any treaty stipulations and had no status in international law. They were alleged to be " free " : they were in reality subjected to coercive measures which gave cause for great anxiety. The ICRC was not able to take any effective action in their favour until the beginning of 1944.

Civilian workers in Germany were conscripted by various methods and their treatment differed according to the manner in which they had been pressed into service, their skill and the type of work required of them. Voluntary workers, who were assured by contract of normal living and working conditions, offered no problems until military operations made impossible for them to correspond direct with their relatives.

There were (1) those called up (*requis*) for compulsory labour service and made available to the Germans by the French Authorities ; (2) those who had eluded that service and were then tracked down, threatened, arrested and finally sent by force to Germany ; (3) prisoners of war who had been repatriated for sickness and then sent back to work in Germany ; (4) many who had been convicted on various charges and at the end of their sentence retained as workers ; (5) prisoners of war " converted " (*transformés*) into civilian workers ¹ ; (6) most important, countless men and women in all parts of Europe who were arrested and pressed into work for Germany against their will.

Sometimes civilians who had been forcibly conscripted were put to work locally, but usually they were sent to other territories where they could be more easily supervised.

The regimen for these civilian workers was not uniform : some had fairly decent living conditions and were lodged in huts adjoining the works where they were employed, or were given accommodation by the contractors or in the homes of the farmers. The great majority, however, were those who had eluded forced labour, compulsory workers and others ; they were assembled in labour camps where the treatment was often very harsh. There were also disciplinary labour camps, where the internees were usually persons under suspicion of holding subversive political opinions, or those convicted of breaches and offences, often of a trivial nature. These camps were under the control of the Gestapo, and living conditions therein were often more rigorous than in ordinary camps. Civilian workers were frequently kept in solitary confinement

¹ See p. 544.

for several months. Towards the end of the war, the German authorities had assembled the large majority (80%) of the civilian workers, for the purpose of control, into special camps (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft-Sonderlager*).

In principle, civilian workers received wages and ration cards, entitling them to procure food and clothing in the same manner as German workers. In practice, it was often a quite different matter. A great many civilian workers, arrested without warning and carried off at once to Germany, arrived there without any kit, and wearing summer clothing and light footwear. When the industrial centres where they lived were bombed and their personal belongings were destroyed, they had no means of replacing them. As the food situation was very precarious, they suffered badly from underfeeding.

For long the ICRC was unable to intervene in behalf of civilian workers, because they enjoyed no protection under international law. In theory, they were living at liberty in Germany and deemed to be "free" and "volunteers". Their status rested only on agreements reached between the German Government and the authorities in occupied territories (for instance, the French Government). On these grounds, the German authorities tolerated no intervention in their dealings with the alien civilian workers they employed in the territories under their control, and who formed part of the *Arbeitsfront* (Labour Front). Various societies were formed to look after the French workers. In Paris, there were the *Amis des travailleurs français en Allemagne* (Friends of French Workers in Germany) for help to the voluntary workers, the *Service social d'aide aux Emigrants* (Emigrants Welfare Service) and, of more importance, the *Commissariat des travailleurs en Allemagne* (Commission for Workers in Germany), instituted by the Government authorities in occupied France, with headquarters in Germany. Belgian workers had no organization in Germany of this description to which they could apply. The Italian workers could seek advice and information from the *Dienststelle* (Centre) at the Italian Embassy, Berlin. The Yugoslav and Polish workers were entirely deprived of protection and were subject without redress to the will of the German authorities.

For some years the German authorities were not willing to grant a status to French civilian workers, on the grounds that they did not consider them to be nationals of a country with which Germany was at war. They argued that the organizations set up to look after the interests of French civilian workers were apparently adequate to ensure their protection. In regard to civilian workers of other nationalities, they maintained their right to treat them as they thought fit.

During the summer of 1944, however, the conditions for civilian workers suddenly became worse. When the second front was formed by the Allies in Western Europe, the majority of the workers, Belgian, Dutch and French were cut off from their own countries. They were thus deprived of all protection and could no longer receive news or parcels from their relatives.

To help them, the ICRC again approached the authorities in Berlin, Paris and Brussels. It first attempted to deal with the problem of the sudden stoppage in communications between civilian workers and their homes. Before this stoppage occurred, workers could send letters : the present situation now required the adoption of the Civilian Message System, i.e. forms with the Red Cross heading, by which senders and receivers could exchange twenty-five word family messages. In September 1944, the Committee took on the forwarding of these messages and, in order to speed up the process, helped the French Red Cross by having the sorting done at Geneva. The same service, operating in the reverse direction, was rendered to the German Red Cross. French civilian workers were able to send two messages a month. By November 1944, the system was working as well as circumstances allowed between Germany and the Western countries. The number of messages exchanged by civilian workers and their relatives, through the ICRC, amounted to 4,279,197.

The civilian message forms were distributed to civilian workers by the German Red Cross and to their next of kin by the National Red Cross Societies. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining the workers' correct addresses. In countries other than Germany, the scheme was more difficult to put into motion, and only succeeded after a considerable lapse of time.

The situation of PW who had been " converted " into civilian

workers made a special problem when the Provisional Government of the French Republic requested that these men should have the same means for correspondence with their families as prisoners of war, and should not be limited to the Civilian Message forms. As the Committee had every reason to fear that further demands of this nature would prejudice the concessions already obtained for civilian workers' mail, they were unable to attempt a solution of the problem.

Enquiries for civilian workers were hampered by the fact that they had nowhere been recorded in a card index. The fairly detailed index kept by the *Arbeitsfront* was not open for consultation. It was quite impossible even to estimate the number of Italian civilian workers, for no organization was in a position to make out lists, or to trace any single worker among them. No index had been made by the Italian authorities.

The Committee's delegation in Berlin made every effort to collect information relating to civilian workers of all nationalities, for transmission to Geneva. There was no system for the notification of deaths. Until 1944, the deaths of French civilian workers were listed by the industrial concerns where they were employed and communicated to the French Delegation in Germany. When the war gathered momentum, the German Red Cross merely sent the names of deceased civilian workers to the ICRC, and omitted death certificates. The ICRC therefore supplied the death certificate forms to the *Arbeitsfront*, since it possessed a card index and was apparently in a better position than the German Red Cross to establish such documents. Where the Italians were concerned, before this system came into force, deaths were not recorded by any agency. The mail of the deceased person was merely sent back with the remark *Gestorben* (deceased) or marked with a cross on the envelope.

The plight of civilian workers who became sick was also a distressing problem. The workers discharged because of ill health ceased to receive wages, and the daily sick-pay from health insurance was paid to them only for a few weeks. As they were no longer recognized as sick employees by the concerns for whom they had worked, they could not claim their ration cards

and did not know to whom they could turn for help. The Committee appealed to the German authorities to allow the repatriation of the seriously sick. In so doing, they met with great opposition from the police authorities, who feared leakage of information which might affect national security. It was then proposed that these men should be admitted to hospital, with the prospect of repatriation after a few months' quarantine. In order that the most urgent cases might have attention, the ICRC suggested that PW medical officers might be allowed to tend sick civilian workers lodged in the camps in their districts. In October 1944, the Provisional Government of the French Republic agreed to this plan. The Committee then recalled to the German authorities that they had already made a similar request, in behalf of German civilian internees, in 1943. The German authorities at first refused, on the score of the danger of the transmission of information of a military or political nature but, after having been approached on several occasions, they informed the Committee, in March 1945, that they had taken the steps requested of them.

The ICRC had also to help a great number of women civilian workers' children, who had been born in Germany, and were living in wretched conditions. The mass repatriation of the children and the mothers could not be considered ; on the other hand, it was not right to part the children from the mothers. A plan should have been ready to repatriate, first, the abandoned children and orphans, then the invalid mothers, who were unfit for work, with their children. The problem was too far-reaching for an appreciable result in a short time. In 1944 and 1945, however, day-nurseries for infants were gradually provided, to which gifts of condensed milk were made under the supervision of the ICRC delegation in Germany.

The Committee made efforts to improve the food supplies for civilian workers, which the advance of the war made very precarious. It was not until February/March 1945, however, that they were able to set on foot a scheme of relief by sending a few parcels to civilian workers of various nationalities. The end of the war came soon afterwards, and the consignments could no longer be sent.

In Allied countries, the conditions for alien civilian workers raised hardly any problems, as they were very rarely subjected to compulsory work. When they contracted for work, it was locally and under fair conditions. The Committee did intervene, however, in 1945, in behalf of Italians of Slovene origin, held in Corsica and Sardinia as civilian workers, who could not correspond with their relatives. A Civilian Message service was arranged for them by way of Rome, where the messages were checked.

(C). REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS

After the conclusion of the first World War, the problem of refugees and stateless persons became of great concern to international agencies and Governments. A very large number of persons then residing outside the borders of their homeland lost their nationality. Without any means of acquiring another, they became stateless. It will be recalled that, at the instigation of the ICRC and of the National Red Cross Societies, the League of Nations set up a High Commissariat with the particular duty of dealing with the case of Russian emigrants, and of Greek and Armenian refugees. This was the origin of the identity document called the "Nansen Passport". Later on, the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (ICR) was set up in 1938 for the protection of persons who had to leave their homes through the rise of the Fascist and Nazi movements.

The second World War was marked by a series of migrations, deportations and mass transfers of population which greatly heightened the gravity of the problem. When the fighting ceased, millions of "Displaced Persons" (DPs) were to be found in Europe, chiefly in Germany and Austria. Although the majority were able to return to their countries of origin, large numbers remained on the spot; some were housed in camps opened for this purpose by the Allied military authorities and UNRRA; others lived as best they could amongst the local population. Of this mass of DPs very many refused to go back to their country of origin. They were thus in a particular difficult situation, as they no longer enjoyed the protection of their

Government, and many did not belong to the categories who were entitled to assistance from UNRRA.

Though fully conscious of the tragic plight of these refugees and DPs, and anxious to co-operate in their relief, the ICRC was at once forced to recognize that it could not give itself all the help it would have wished. The problem was so vast and raised so many varied questions, that it went far beyond the material resources and the competence of the Committee. It was not only a matter of housing these exiles and giving them material aid ; many of them required a new legal status and identification papers, which would enable them to lead a comparatively normal existence in their country of residence, until arrangements could be made for the emigration of those who could not be assimilated.

On August 25, 1945, the ICRC approached the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (ICR), with information about the legal position and economic situation of those DPs who could not be sent to their former homes ; the ICRC further offered its co-operation, should this be desired.

The debates during the Fifth Session of the ICR, held in Paris on November 20-22, 1945, showed that this body wished to confine its welfare action to the groups of refugees specified under its statutes, namely the victims of Fascism and Nazism ; to these the Spanish refugees were added. The ICRC intervened again on December 13, 1945, and stressed that these exiles were in urgent need of moral and material support by some international agency ; it asked " to whom it should hand over the steadily increasing number of applications received in Geneva, not only for emergency relief. Many correspondents ask that a competent agency should take steps for the emigration of the refugees and for their temporary or permanent establishment in their country of residence (issue of establishment and working permits, eligibility for relief, etc.)."

In his reply, dated January 9, 1946, the Director-General of the ICR said he would be happy to take " every possible occasion to co-operate closely and usefully with the ICRC.", and his gratitude " for any information which the ICRC could communicate on the situation of the refugees ".

He further confirmed that its terms of reference did not allow the ICR to deal with DPs who refused to go back to their homes. He specified that UNRRA had been given the necessary powers to issue relief in kind to this class of persons, and recalled that the question of refugees had been placed on the agenda of United Nations.

On February 12, 1946, the General Assembly of United Nations unanimously agreed upon the principle that in the absence of national authorities representing the interests of persons who considered they were for the time being unable to return to their home countries, it was for the Governments of the countries where these persons had found refuge to extend to them the right of asylum, in accordance with international law, and in particular to refrain from sending them back to their own country against their wish. The Assembly further instructed the Economic and Social Council to study the creation of an International Refugee Organization (IRO).

As the result of a steadily increasing number of appeals, the ICRC applied on May 6, 1946, to the Secretaries for Foreign Affairs of the Western occupying Powers. It expressed the hope that the resolution of the General Assembly of United Nations, which gave the refugee problem a favourable solution in principle, might lead the Economic and Social Council to set up an international agency to deal with the future of the refugees. "To the question of repatriation or the option they demand of avoiding forcible return to their home country", the ICRC added, "many other vital problems arise for the people who have been driven from their home countries by the events of war."

Since it was clear, however, that some time would elapse before the proposed body was actually set up, the ICRC asked what military or civil authority the Committee could in future send the applications which it was constantly receiving from former PW, DPs and refugees, and which they would be glad to hand over to an agency competent to examine such cases.

The French Government named a department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to deal with these appeals, whereas the

British Government merely advised the ICRC to hand them to the responsible military authorities.

Official organizations thus dealt with the matter in a very imperfect manner. Only a small proportion of the refugees was actually helped, either by the ICR, whose protection extended only to certain specific classes, or by UNRRA, whose work covered neither the refugees living outside the camps, nor former enemy nationals.

In view of this situation, and being anxious to assist to the best of its ability, the ICRC considered that the most useful service it could render would be to collect the fullest data on the subject and to forward them, as it had been asked, to the ICR and to the other agencies concerned. The Committee then assembled the information supplied by its delegates who visited the refugee centres, or by groups of refugees, private persons and to relief organizations. In the autumn of 1945, the Committee made a census of DPs who were not eligible for repatriation. Information on their numbers, living conditions (health, food, clothing, housing), and opportunities for emigration, were classified according to nationalities and areas of residence. These schedules provided the most accurate picture possible of the refugee situation in the occupation zones in Germany and Austria, and also in Italy, Denmark, Norway and Czechoslovakia. The statements on the refugee situation were carefully kept up to date, and were sent regularly to the responsible authorities and agencies during the years 1946 and 1947.

The ICRC did not confine its co-operation to such work. Whilst endeavouring to facilitate the creation of a body with sufficiently extensive powers, the Committee itself took practical action in certain fields.

The work of the Committee was indeed indispensable in almost all the domains of refugee relief. Like most of its delegations, it received in Geneva thousands of appeals; help was sought not only by refugees, but by private associations, national Red Cross Societies, civil and military authorities, and by the intergovernmental organizations themselves. We must remember that, contrary to many government or private agencies, the ICRC could extend its help without discrimination

to all refugees, without any consideration of political opinion, nationality, race or religious belief.

The chief bodies with which the ICRC was thus led to co-operate were the British Red Cross, the International Social Service, the *Deutsche Caritas Verband* (German Caritas Association), the Survey Committee on Displaced Persons (Washington), the World Council of Churches, the Vatican Relief Committee, the relief agencies set up by the countrymen of the DPs, settled in overseas countries, and the Jewish organisations.

Space does not allow a detailed statement of the attempts made by the ICRC to find practical answers to the refugee problem. Today even, the setting up of IRO has not entirely solved the question, especially as regards the legal status of DPs. Their living conditions, their needs, the causes which lie at the root of their leaving home, are too varied. We shall deal here only with the main achievements.

Relief. — On the outbreak of war, the ICRC had opportunity to send relief to the refugee camps in the south of France.

When hostilities were over, the ICRC had on hand large stocks of goods and funds, coming from various sources and which were intended for prisoners of war. A small part of these supplies and funds were made available to the Committee by the donors and were used for DPs, amongst whom were a great many former PW and deportees who had been unable to return home.

By the end of 1945, the ICRC was able to undertake issue of relief supplies, through gifts in kind and in money sent to them by several Governments and national Red Cross Societies for DPs of specified nationalities.

Particulars of these relief schemes will be found in Vol. III ¹. Reference can also be made to the Report of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross. The work of this Joint Commission, which was set up by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies to assist the civilian populations in the occupied countries, also covered to a certain extent the refugees who were living in these countries.

¹ See Part I, chap. 11, and Part. III, chap. 4.

Dispersed Families. — For Europe alone, the number of DPs has been estimated at close on thirty millions. We can readily imagine the number of dispersed families which this figure represents. In the summer of 1943 already, the ICRC took up the question of how to re-establish communications between them. Seconded in this work by national Red Cross Societies, the ICRC introduced in addition to the Civilian Message Scheme (see Vol. II), a system of identity cards which, in spite of almost insuperable difficulties, proved extremely useful. In full agreement with UNRRA (set up in November 1943), the ICRC made arrangements to act as central research bureau, as soon as the end of the war would allow wide-scale research. The "Dispersed Families Service" was opened for this purpose; without awaiting the end of the war, it began at once to gather all obtainable information. When the time came, this Service was ready to act. Suddenly, however, UNRRA decided to create its own Central Bureau and regional offices. The ICRC had therefore to abandon a scheme which could have been extremely useful. Before winding up the Service, every possible use had been made of the assembled data; the enquiries or information which continued to reach Geneva were then sent on to the offices of UNRRA.

In Vol. II will be found all details of the attempts made by the ICRC, and of its achievements in this most important field.

Correspondence. — The disappearance of the German and Austrian Post Offices prevented the resumption of regular correspondence between the DPs and their relatives; the ICRC therefore supplied its delegates and the leaders of the fleets of motor vehicles which travelled to Germany and Austria, with stocks of printed forms for distribution to the DPs. These very simply worded forms were meant to allow these persons to give news of their state of health and their temporary address. No reply was provided for.

Between June 5, 1945 and March 5, 1946, 135,000 such forms were collected and forwarded through the Central PW Agency to the following countries: Hungary, Germany, Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Austria, Russia, France

and Italy. In addition, about 60,000 forms filled up by DPs from Hungary, were sent direct from Germany to Hungary.

This scheme, which enabled DPs to give brief news to their families, was not however a real mail service. The ICRC therefore proposed, on October 18, 1945, to the US Commander of Armed Forces in the European Theatre, to introduce a form containing 25 words which would have been issued in DP camps, and which the ICRC would have undertaken to send to their destination. Unfortunately, this suggestion was not approved.

The DPs were, on the other hand, able to benefit to a certain extent by the Civilian Message Scheme, which the ICRC had asked the Allied Authorities to authorize once more, in order that civilians in the occupied countries might correspond with countries abroad.

In Austria, the Civilian Message Scheme was started again in the British occupation zone (September 12, 1945), and in the American and French occupation zones (November 15, 1945). In Germany, the American and British authorities unfortunately did not allow the resumption of the Scheme, but this mode of correspondence functioned as from January 19, 1946, in the French zone.

Travel Documents. — At the end of the war, many persons who were released from PW, deportee and workers' camps had no identification papers, since these had been impounded by the detaining authorities. In the absence of any diplomatic or consular services to whom they could apply, these persons turned to the delegates of the ICRC, asking them to issue a document which would enable them to solicit the appropriate military authorities for repatriation. In view of the distressing situation of these applicants, the ICRC took steps in February 1945, to establish a "Travel Document" (bearing the number CICR 10.100), for issue by its delegations abroad to former detainees who applied to them. This Travel Document was soon enlarged to a document bearing the number CICRC 10,100 B. This merely registers the verbal statements made by the

bearer ; its period of validity is limited, and it constitutes neither an identity card, nor a passport. It is handed to persons who are without identification papers, and who are unable to procure new ones ; it is chiefly intended to enable dispersed civilians in Europe to emigrate to a country of their choice, where they may start a new life, but it also serves, should the need arise, to facilitate their repatriation, or merely to justify their presence in the place where they may be living as a result of the war.

The issue of Travel Documents is obviously subject to the approval of the Allied and local Authorities. Moreover, the main condition required of the applicant is to produce the written promise of a visa granted by the Consulate of the country where he wishes to go, and an authorization to leave his country of residence.

The work of the ICRC in this field depended on the attitude of the Consulates of the immigrant countries, and could be pursued only in countries where consular services had been speedily re-opened. In Germany, the country which has the largest numbers of DPs, Travel Documents have been issued only in a few cases, owing to the almost total absence of foreign consulates. The Committee's delegations in Italy, Czechoslovakia and Austria had, however, issued over 9,000 of these documents by Nov. 30, 1946. The holders of these travel documents were able to travel to the countries where they wished to go in South America (Brazil, the Argentine, Paraguay) and North America. In France, the responsible authorities showed readiness to recognize this document, and this enabled the Committee's delegation in Paris to issue a limited number.

In April 1946, the ICRC informed the ICR of its inability, on account of financial stringency, to continue this work, and asked the ICR to take it over. In his reply dated June 4, 1946, the Assistant Director of the ICR replied that UNO were contemplating establishing a new body to deal with DPs of all categories. He expressed the wish, however, that until it was possible to issue a new identity document which could have international recognition, the ICRC should continue to

issue Document 10.100 B which, he said, "although not having the features and all the advantages of a real identity and travel certificate, had nevertheless proved most useful."

It will be recalled that on December 15, 1946, the General Assembly of UNO adopted the draft constitution of the International Refugee Organization (IRO). The Preparatory Commission of IRO held its first sessions in Geneva (February 1947), then in Lausanne (May and July 1947). UNRRA and the ICR ceased all their activities on June 30, 1947, and the Preparatory Commission of IRO became operative. Needless to say, the work of the ICRC in this particular field ceases when the authorities of the countries where the refugees are living offer them the means of securing either a government travel certificate, or a passport for travel abroad. Thus, the Committee's work in Czechoslovakia was stopped in the spring of 1947. At the same time, the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed the Committee's delegation in Rome that Italy had ratified the intergovernmental agreement on the issue of travel certificates. The delegation was, however, asked to continue to establish Document 10,100 B for some months still, until the practical measures adopted by the Italian authorities could come into force.

Camp visits. — Besides the above activities, the ICRC instructed its delegates to visit the DP camps, with a view to any local improvements they might be able to secure in living conditions and regimen. An instance of this work was the services rendered to former Yugoslav PW in Austria, and to the Baltic refugees who were threatened with loss of their ration books, as a result of difficulties with the military authorities and UNRRA.

The Committee's Delegation in Berlin also took steps in behalf of former Allied PW who asked either to be released from the camps, or to enjoy living conditions equal to those granted to them as PW. The Committee's delegates also obtained transport facilities for groups of children, and tried to find opportunities of emigration for DPs.

In Italy, the Committee's delegates were very active in behalf of refugees, in particular by asking that the refugees should be assembled according to nationality, that common law criminals be segregated, and that aliens whose papers were in order and who were charged with no offence, should be released.

In Denmark, the Committee's delegates several times visited German refugee camps, in particular the large camp at Okshöl, which numbered some 35,000 in June 1946. They talked with the refugees and their spokesmen, and drew the attention of the British Military Command and the Danish authorities to improvements which should be made in the treatment of the internees, especially as regards housing, sanitary installations, mail, educational activities, recreation, etc. These refugees had no Protecting Power ; their morale was lowered by idleness, although their living conditions were in general good. The Committee's delegates did what they could to help them ; in co-operation with the Danish authorities, they were able to renew contact between many refugees and relatives from whom they had had no news for years. They also stressed with the Danish authorities the advisability of holding out hopes of being sent home — the refugees' most ardent desire, and the only prospect able to improve their morale.

Lastly, the Committee's Delegation approached the Allied authorities on several occasions, to recommend that refugees should not be repatriated against their will, when they had justifiable reasons for refusal. All the Committee's delegates were instructed to notify the appropriate authorities, on this occasion as on others, that in its view repatriation should never be compulsory. This view was confirmed by the General Assembly of UNO in their Resolution of February 12, 1946, according to which " no refugees or displaced persons shall be compelled to return to their country of origin, if, after receiving full knowledge of the facts, including adequate information from the governments of their countries of origin, they have expressed valid objections to returning ", with the exception, in particular, of " war criminals and traitors ".

(D). RACIAL MINORITIES

1. General Remarks

Another category of civilians who were a matter of grave concern to the ICRC were the racial minorities expelled after the end of the war from their countries of domicile.

Article 13 of the Potsdam Agreement, signed in Berlin on August 2, 1945, provided for the removal to Germany of German populations who were resident in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. However, as described below, measures of expulsion had already been taken immediately at the end of the war, whilst others were decreed at a later date. Close on fourteen million people affected by these measures were thus forced to abandon their homes at short notice, and those who had had to leave them for a time because of the fighting, were prevented from returning ¹.

The ICRC at once received a great number of appeals, drawing its attention to the alarming conditions of food and health in which a great number of these people were living, after hasty expulsion from their homes and assembly in provisional camps, and also to the often deplorable conditions of their transfer to Germany. Had it been borne in mind that the repatriation of some 1,500,000 Greeks from Asia Minor, after the first World War, had taken several years and required large-scale relief schemes, it would have been easy to foresee that the hurried transplanting of fourteen million human beings would raise a large number of problems from the humanitarian standpoint, especially in a Europe strewn with ruins and where starvation was rife.

The question arose what the ICRC could do. As regards the principle of the transfer of population it was powerless. The

¹ These measures were applied not only to German citizens, termed *Reichsdeutsche*, living in those countries, and to Germans in territories of Eastern Germany awarded to Poland by the Potsdam Agreement, but also to members of various German-speaking racial minorities in Central European countries and in the Balkans, who were called *Volksdeutsche*.

decision had already been made, either by common consent between the Allied Powers, or unilaterally by sovereign States. There had moreover been precedents ; mass transfers of populations had already taken place during the war, which were decided upon by international agreement, or on the authority of the German Government alone. The population concerned belonged to German racial minorities in Rumania, the Baltic States, Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia. At that time, however, the German Government was in a position to ensure adequate living conditions for the persons whose removal it had itself requires or organized. In 1945, on the other hand, the German minorities had no national government, no National Red Cross Society and no Protecting Power to look after them. They therefore called upon the ICRC.

The Committee could not remain deaf to this appeal. The immediate consequences of the war were that still more millions of human beings were thrown into poverty and distress, and left without protection. These facts were enough for the Committee to attempt, to the best of its ability, some alleviation in the fate of these people.

It must be admitted, however, that little could be done. The vast compass of these deportations and the haste with which they were carried out, the inadequate means at the disposal of the Committee, almost exhausted after six years of war, and the number of other urgent tasks to which these means had also, or primarily to be devoted—these, and many other causes prevented the ICRC from doing all that it wished to accomplish. There were still further factors : the accumulation of difficulties brought about by the destruction of war, the apathy and lack of interest in the deported minorities on the part of peoples who had themselves been too long oppressed and persecuted ; these too contributed to tie the hands of the Committee.

As soon as the ICRC had sufficient information on the problem, and independently of practical schemes of relief it had undertaken from the outset, it decided to approach the Great Powers and to offer them its services. On September 8, 1945, it sent the following telegram to the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States.

The International Committee is receiving numerous and pressing appeals relating to the situation of the civil populations whose transfer from one part of Europe to another has already begun, or is now contemplated. These appeals stress the fate of millions of people, of whom a large proportion are women and children and who seem to be exposed to wander without shelter or means of existence. Unaware of the measures taken or decided on, in particular by the countries of departure or destination, the Committee offers its co-operation, if it be considered opportune, and that of its delegations in Germany and the neighbouring countries, in particular to investigate needs, or to distribute the relief supplies which would immediately be placed at its disposal, or which it could collect itself with the help of other relief societies. The Committee hopes then to receive from the competent authorities all facilities for relief work on the spot ¹.

At the end of the war, neither stocks of goods, nor funds of its own were immediately available to the ICRC. Its only course, besides that of asking Governments that the deportations should be carried out in conditions as humane as possible, was to enlist the co-operation of Red Cross Societies or of other relief organizations, and to collect funds. In so far as consent was given to the work of the Committee, it could visit assembly camps and assist in distributing relief. An account follows of how such work was carried out in various countries.

2. Camp visits and negotiations with Authorities

Czechoslovakia. — It was in this country that the ICRC first had to deal with the problem of racial minorities. A great number of people were hurriedly interned in camps, whilst awaiting their deportation from the country. Since the only grounds for this internment previous to expulsion were the German origin of those concerned, the ICRC held that, from the humanitarian point of view, these internees should logically be classed with "civilian internees" ². The Committee approached the Czech Government and attempted to have this view accepted: it also asked that its delegation be given the right to visit camps.

¹ The Governments to whom this telegram was addressed did not vouchsafe any reply to the ICRC on the offer of its services.

² See above, Part IV, Chapter 2.

The first visit took place on June 2, 1945, at Patronka near Bratislava. Subsequently, the Slovak Government gave the delegation of the ICRC general authority to visit camps in Slovakia, whereas the Czech Authorities required special application to be made for each visit. Delegates carried out 72 visits to 56 camps between June 2, 1945 and June 30, 1947. In accordance with arrangements made with the Czechoslovak Government, who had agreed that there should be co-operation between the Delegation of the ICRC on the one hand and the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Public Health on the other, a separate report was made on each visit, and handed to the responsible authorities with the comments of the Delegation.

Moreover, the ICRC on March 14, 1946 sent a general Memorandum to the Prague Government. Whilst having to refrain from taking any stand on the decision in principle which had led to these deportations, and taking into consideration only their consequences on the humanitarian plane, the ICRC recalled that it held it to be its duty to contribute, to the best of its ability, to rendering the carrying out of these transfers as humane as possible. Generally speaking, the ICRC was of opinion that, in view of the unsatisfactory conditions in these camps, it was important to put an end to the provisional internment as soon as possible. The Memorandum further maintained that during this internment the persons concerned should be given the same status as "civilian internees", and expressed the wish that the full list of camps should be sent to the Committee. Whilst recognizing the improvements already made by the authorities in the treatment of the internees, the Committee suggested the adoption of various urgent measures, in particular to reunite members of the same family, to increase food rations and clothing issues, and to improve hygiene, medical care and accommodation.

Finally, the ICRC stressed the importance of allowing those deported to bring away personal belongings and foodstuffs in sufficient quantity, in order to avoid their arriving in Germany, as it happened all too often, in a state of complete exhaustion and undernourishment. These conditions could very rarely

be alleviated by the very scanty stocks available in a ruined and disorganized country.

The Delegation in Czechoslovakia, which remained throughout in contact with the authorities responsible for this question, was glad to observe a real improvement in the situation. It also looked after members of racial minorities who had been imprisoned, often without any charge being brought against them, and secured the release of several hundreds, subject to their ultimate deportation.

The Delegation of the ICRC also had occasion to investigate the position of members of the Hungarian minority, whose transfer had also been decided on by the Czechoslovak Government. It did not, however, fall to the ICRC to take any action in this question, since these people, unlike the German minorities, had a Government and a National Red Cross in their own country to look after their interests.

Poland. — It was not until June 1946 that the ICRC was able to post a delegate in Poland. During the first months, he experienced some difficulty in getting recognition of his right to investigate the problem of the German minority. He was moreover taken up by his work in behalf of the tens of thousands of PW held in Poland. He was able, nevertheless, to establish useful contact at once with the Polish Red Cross, which had sick German civilians locally in its care in Silesia. This contact led later on, at the beginning of 1947, to the permission given by the Central Committee of the Polish Red Cross to its Information Bureau in Warsaw to extend its work to German civilians. Moreover, the Delegation of the ICRC succeeded, at the same period, in taking up the problem of the German minority with the Ministry of the Interior. Having learned that convoys of evacuees had arrived in Germany in a very bad condition owing to the hardships of the winter, the Delegation managed to induce the Ministry to postpone these deportations to a milder season. Finally, on June 27, 1947, following on a request from Geneva, the delegate was authorized to visit assembly camps and he was able at once to undertake the first visit to Kalawsk Camp.

Yugoslavia. — The Yugoslav Government had also issued decrees for the deportation of members of the German minority in Yugoslavia. There too, numerous German civilians were interned or held in custody whilst awaiting their transfer. The ICRC was hardly able to take any action on this question. Permission had not been granted to increase the strength of the Delegation, and activities therefore had to be confined to its customary work for PW. The Committee did not however lose sight of the matter. Private appeals and reports to the effect that conditions of internment were not satisfactory as regards food, hygiene and treatment having reached Geneva, the ICRC informed the Yugoslav Red Cross. It furthermore asked this Society, as it was unable itself to take any steps, to include in its own activities humanitarian relief to members of German minorities interned or held in custody ¹.

Rumania. — In January and February 1945, the delegation of the ICRC was able to visit members of racial minorities who had been interned in civilian internee camps at Slobozia, Caracal and Targu-Giu. After the Rumanian Government had, in March 1945, ceased to authorize camp visits, the ICRC, which still received numerous applications, continued to approach the authorities in the attempt to improve the situation of these people, since they were without any Protecting Power.

Hungary. — The Delegation in Budapest was able to make visits to camps in November 1945 and January 1946. After one of these visits, the delegation submitted its comment to the Hungarian Authorities with the object of improving the conditions of internment.

¹ Although this Report ends at June 30, 1947, mention must be made here of the reply of the Yugoslav Red Cross, dated August 6, 1947. After quoting the various measures taken or contemplated by the Government in behalf of German minorities in Yugoslavia, the Society stated that it carried out regular humanitarian relief work amongst these people, in particular in finding homes for orphans or children who were abandoned, and by the despatch to German communities of medical teams and stores. The Society also intended to support measures for promoting the emigration of minorities.

3. Relief

The facts established by the delegates when visiting the camps, during the course of transfers, or in in the countries of destination, required more than steps with the competent authorities. They also demanded emergency schemes for relief. Since no funds or goods were available for these minorities, the ICRC, besides making some direct consignments, mainly played the part of a welfare intermediary, making every endeavour to collect funds and to promote the despatch of relief consignments. With this end in view, it forwarded the appeals, application sand reports received to the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, and to the Swiss Relief Fund, as a first step, and asked them to include these minorities in their future relief schemes. Such appeals were later sent to the organizations which, in conjunction with the ICRC, signed annual appeals in behalf of civil populations¹. These were : the Caritas Catholica Internationalis, the World Council of Churches, the OSE Union, the International Union for Child Welfare, the World Alliance of YMCA, the World Alliance of YWCA, the American Friends' Service Committee, the World Student Relief Fund, and yet others, according to the purpose. Finally, the ICRC lent the services of their delegations for co-operation in the distributing of relief supplies, in particular to the internment camps, which in many cases the Delegations alone had the right to visit.

For further details on the relief work entailed, see Vol. III, and more particularly the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

4. Legal Protection

The reception and accommodation of such multitudes of people in a country destroyed and lacking in food demanded more than relief schemes. It gave rise to many problems, in particular the legal protection of the members of racial minorities, who were considered as Germans in their former country of residence and as such forfeited the citizenship of that State,

¹ Two of these appeals, those of 1946 and 1947, make explicit reference to the needs of transferred populations.

but could not lay claim to German citizenship. The ICRC, convinced that only an inter-governmental organization would be able to solve this problem, sent a Memorandum to the Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization (IRO), suggesting that this body should extend its assistance, in particular in the legal field, to members of expelled minorities not of German origin.

This intervention forms part of the work which the ICRC is still pursuing in behalf of refugees and stateless persons, and which is dealt with in the preceding Section D.

VII. Protection of Civilian Populations against the effects of War

(A). PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AGAINST BOMBARDMENTS

1. Historical Introduction

There is a principle which governs the laws of war as a whole and which informs the regulations gradually evolved for the limitation of bombardment in time of war and to give protection to civil populations. This principle is that belligerents may not have the unrestricted option of means to do injury to the enemy.

Already in 1874 the Brussels Conference, in its draft International Declaration, stipulated (Art. 15) that "open and undefended" towns, built-up areas and villages should not be attacked or bombarded. The Conference thus drew a distinction between fortified and open towns.

This distinction was not retained by the first Peace Conference held at the Hague in 1899, and only the idea of "defence" was approved. Article 25 of the Regulations annexed to the Second Convention of 1899 merely forbids attack or bombardment of towns or villages "which are not defended". This stipulation was revived by the Fourth Hague Convention in 1907. It is further stated in Art. 25 of the Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land that bombardment "by any means whatsoever" of undefended towns and villages is prohibited. The object was to ensure application of the

Regulations to bombing from airships, a possibility that was foreseen ¹.

Further, the 1899 Conference sanctioned for the first time a new discriminative standard, that of the "military objective". The Second Hague Convention of 1907 had recognized (Art. 2) naval bombardment of a town or port, even undefended, when the aim of these bombardments was to destroy certain objectives listed in the Article and which constitute, in point of fact, military objectives. It may be argued that this new specification was not taken into account in framing the Hague Regulations, because aviation was only rudimentary in 1907 and its potentialities in war were as yet unknown.

It should also be pointed out that Art. 25 of the 1899 Regulations covers only undefended localities of the forward zone. At that time it would have been inconceivable to legislate for the protection of localities in the rear which, in point of fact, enjoyed complete immunity.

It was at this period too, it appears, that a beginning was made with the inclusion of the "military objective" concept in the common law of warfare. In most of the armed conflicts which have broken out since 1914, belligerents nearly always relied on this tenet to justify bombardments considered by the adversary as against the laws of war. The disputes which this subject has provoked have turned, not on the principle of the legality of bombarding military objectives, but on what kind of targets constitute such objectives. In 1923, a Committee of legal experts met at the Hague and framed draft regulations on air warfare. A classification by kind of military objectives was attempted, and list was made of them (Art. 24). Further, this Committee laid down the principle according to which the only bombardments admitted as permissible were those carried out in the zone of operations.

Immediately after the end of the first World War, the ICRC decided within its own competence to examine measures likely to ensure a certain limitation of methods of warfare and to

¹ The first bombings by plane took place during the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-1912.

protect the civil populations. At the first Assembly of the League of Nations it tabled a number of suggestions for ruling out the new methods of warfare which had come into use in the war of 1914-1918. The ICRC advocated, in particular, the prohibition of gas and the limitation of air warfare by ruling out bombardment of the civil population. It further recommended strict application of Art. 25 of the Hague Regulations, which forbids bombardment of undefended localities, by giving so precise a definition to "undefended localities" that prohibition could not easily be evaded.

These principles were taken up by the Tenth International Red Cross Conference (1921), when Governments were invited to conclude agreements in this sense and as complements to the Fourth Hague Convention.

The Twelfth International Red Cross Conference (1925) recorded its satisfaction at the signature, on June 17, 1925, of the "Protocol of Geneva", which makes solemn condemnation of all means of chemical or bacteriological warfare. The opinion of the Conference was that, in case of a possible violation of this Protocol, it should be the task of the Red Cross to make researches in time of peace, in co-operation with civil and military authorities, on the means to protect civil populations from the effects of chemical and bacteriological warfare. In response, the ICRC convened an International Commission of Experts, first in Brussels (1928), later in Rome (1929), and requested that its deliberations cover bombardments by aircraft. This Commission proposed various measures of a general nature which tended in the main to prescribe education of the public in means of protection against aero-chemical warfare and bombardments, by the creation of an information centre within the responsibility of the ICRC, and by special instructions to be given the civil population.

Moreover, since the Commission had recognized the impossibility of complete protection by technical means alone, the Committee also gave its attention to the legal aspect of protection of civilians. In 1930, eight eminent jurists of different countries were consulted by the Committee for their considered opinion on the possibility of making explicit those clauses in international

law which give protection to the civil populations outside the fighting zone against bombardments of all kinds, or of making these clauses much more effective.

These consultations, and the resolutions of the Commission of Experts in Rome, led the Fourteenth Red Cross Conference (Brussels, 1930) to entrust the ICRC explicitly with the task of studying measures of reinforcing the legal position of civil populations in time of war. To meet this new task the ICRC convened a Commission, consisting exclusively of legal experts, which met in Geneva in 1931.

This Commission, after examination of the Conventions then in force and study of the possibilities of extending their scope, adopted a report which makes it clear that only total prohibition of bombardment from the air and of chemical warfare would, from the legal point of view, ensure effective protection of civil populations.

A few months later a Conference met in Geneva, under the auspices of the League of Nations, for the reduction and limitation of armaments. The ICRC seized this opportunity of laying before the members of this Conference a collection of all data it had assembled on the subject of chemical and air warfare. At the same time, it made an urgent appeal to the Conference for the total prohibition of air bombardment and of chemical and bacteriological warfare.

These endeavours were of no avail, and the ICRC, losing all hope of inducing Governments to agree to total prohibition of air warfare, then turned its labours in a new direction and gave its attention to the setting up of hospital and security localities and zones ¹.

It remains to mention, before closing this chapter, that the Fifteenth International Red Cross Conference (London 1938) addressed a general appeal to the responsible Authorities in all countries, to make every effort to secure the prevention of air bombardment, or such restriction of it that the lives of defenceless women, children and the aged might be safeguarded. The Conference further asked the ICRC to pursue, in co-operation

¹ See the following chapter B, p. 692.

with the Save the Children International Union (now International Union for Child Welfare), its study of means of protecting women and children against suffering caused by war. The second World War broke out shortly afterwards, and the ICRC, abandoning its theoretical studies, devoted its whole time and labour to alleviate, in a practical manner, the misfortunes of war victims.

2. Efforts of the ICRC during the Second World War

The various steps taken by the ICRC during the War in the field of protection of civil populations against bombardments may be divided into two categories. There were its attempts to get agreements from belligerents that bombing be restricted to objectives, the destruction of which would prove necessary for certain war operations. There were also its efforts to promote the institution of security localities or zones. The latter being covered in the following chapter, only the subject of restriction of bombing will be discussed here.

(a) Steps in general against bombing.

On March 12, 1940 the ICRC addressed an appeal to States signatory to the Geneva Convention and of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907.

In this appeal the Committee set forth the problem of protection of civil populations against bombardments and invoked the great principles laid down by the Fourth Hague Convention which, founded on general immunity granted by the law of nations to the civil population, deny belligerents unrestricted rights in the choice of means of inflicting harm on the enemy and prohibits bombardment of undefended towns or dwellings. Since there was no convention which covered the creation of security zones, the Committee proposed to the belligerents that that they should conclude agreements by which, in confirmation of the Fourth Hague Convention, they would declare military objectives to be the only permissible targets, that would indicate such objectives and prohibit any bombardment of the civil

population. It was also suggested that measures should be taken for inspection in the event of alleged infringement. Finally, the Committee made a solemn appeal to the belligerents to refrain from reprisals, and reminded them that in all circumstances persons and objects protected by the Red Cross emblem should never be the object of attacks, not even as a measure of reprisal.

On the same date (March 12, 1940) the ICRC also sent a Circular Letter, No. 362, to National Red Cross Societies, begging that the Societies should approach their respective Governments in support of the above appeal.

Fourteen States replied to this appeal ¹. All concurred with the human principles which inspired it, but none adopted in practice the proposals advanced by the ICRC. Among the major Powers then engaged in the war, the German Government expressed approval of the Committee's proposals, but stated that as long as the enemy did not restrict bombardments to military objectives, it found itself compelled to act in the same way. The Government of the United States replied that it supported the plan put forward by the Committee, and recalled public statements by President Roosevelt condemning bombardment of civil populations. The British Government gave assurances that the RAF had received orders not to bomb non-military objectives, provided that the adversary kept to the same rule. The Italian Government recalled the fact that bombing of the civil population was prohibited by a law enacted in 1938, and that it had every intention of adhering to this principle, in so far as the enemy also conformed to it.

On May 12, 1940, two days after the great German offensive was launched on the Western front, the Committee felt it a duty to address a new note to Governments of belligerent States. As the conflict each day became more intense, the ICRC, recalling the terms of its earlier appeal, again made a solemn call to the belligerents to prohibit attacks on people, who unarmed and

¹ Brazil, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United States of America and Yugoslavia.

innocent of any active part in the struggle, should not have to suffer the assaults of war. In its appeal to the conscience of the nations and in the name of human dignity, the Committee made its voice heard throughout the world.

One Government only, that of Australia, replied to this appeal that it entirely approved both its spirit and its terms.

Three years went by, during which the civil population suffered damage to life and property far exceeding that experienced in the first World War, and which went on increasing. The Committee decided to speak out again, undeterred by the almost complete silence which met their appeal of May 1940, and despite their principle of proving their moral position and their purpose of service by deeds, not words. On July 23, 1943 the Committee sent a telegram to all Governments then at war recalling the two earlier appeals and again begging them to respect man's right not to be made to suffer for acts he had not committed. The Governments were once more besought not to have recourse to destruction which could have no justification and to methods of warfare proscribed by international law and by man's conscience.

A few days later, in a letter of July 30, 1943, the ICRC forwarded the text of this telegram to National Red Cross Societies.

Seventeen Governments replied ¹. They all approved of the step taken by the ICRC and pointed out that they had always respected the principles of the law of nations covering the protection of civilians, and would continue to do so. Some Governments, for example the United States, qualified this statement by saying explicitly that they would refrain from inflicting unnecessary suffering on civil populations "as far as possible". Others, such as Poland and Slovakia, said they would also refrain, "subject to reciprocity".

A few months later, on December 30, 1943, the ICRC when sending an appeal to belligerents to remind them that the

¹ Brazil, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France (French Committee of National Liberation, Algiers), Greece (Greek Government in Cairo), Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Slovakia, Thailand, United States of America.

Geneva Conventions prohibited any kind of reprisal, in particular against prisoners of war, stressed again for the third time, the grave concern it felt as regards methods of warfare which tended less and less to spare the civil population and property of not the slightest military importance. Of this too, the ICRC informed National Societies by letter of January 25, 1944.

Eight States¹ replied to this appeal, but only two took a definite stand regarding the general question of methods of warfare. The United States of America insisted that their armed forces bombarded only objectives with military importance, and Finland made clear that it had never taken the course of bombing behind the front.

During the last two years the War had reached a degree of intensity never known before and had at last become "total" war. The recourse to systematic destruction by bombing from the air, and later to new weapons such as flying bombs and atomic bombs, caused a vast upheaval in the age-long conception of warfare, both in the field of military strategy and in that of international law; the civilized world had now, therefore, to meet problems far more grave and urgent than in the past.

The new character of the weapons of warfare put in peril those values of humane significance over which the Red Cross is one of the staunchest guardians. The Committee then felt prompted to raise its voice yet again, and to draw the attention of all National Red Cross Societies to these grievous questions.

Thus, in its Circular Letter No. 370 of September 5, 1945, it pointed out a few of the most immediate problems which such an upheaval imposed on the Red Cross and on which it was imperative that a pronouncement should be made. We think it useful to quote here some extracts from the Circular.

There can be no doubt that war, an anachronism in a civilized world, has taken on a character so devastating and so wide-spread, in the web of conflicting interests of the various continents, that the thoughts and labours of all should be turned to the paramount task of making impossible the resort to arms. The Red Cross, nevertheless, is compelled, in

¹ China, Finland, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Thailand, United States of America, Yugoslavia (Yugoslav Government in Cairo).

time of war, to pursue its traditional efforts in the field of international law, that is to rise in defence of humanity and of the demands that it makes. At a moment when peace seems, at last, to have returned, it may appear ill-timed to take up such a task, but that should not deflect the Red Cross from this fundamental duty. As the destructive forces of war increase, so much the more imperative does it become to protest against this overthrow of human values and to turn the light of man's conscience, frail though it be, to pierce the darkness.

It is indeed questionable whether the latest developments of the technique of warfare leave any possibility for international law to cover a firm and sound order of society. Already the first World War, and still more the long disaster of the past six years, demonstrate that the conditions which prompted the framing of international law in its model form in the Geneva and Hague Conventions, have undergone far-reaching change. It is clear that developments in aviation and the increasingly destructive effects of bombing have made practically inapplicable the distinctions hitherto drawn, whereby certain classes of people had by right a special protection (for instance, the civil population in contrast to the armed forces). The inevitable development of weapons, and so of warfare as a whole, has a greater significance by reason of the exploitation of the discoveries in nuclear physics, which permit the producing of arms of a potency hitherto unknown. It would be useless to attempt a forecast for this new weapon, or even to express an opinion on the prospect that the Powers would relinquish it altogether. The question arises whether they would, perhaps, keep it in lasting and unfailing reserve as a supreme safeguard against war and as a means of preserving a just order. This hope is not, perhaps, entirely vain as, during this six years struggle, there has been no recourse to the chemical or bacteriological means of warfare as outlawed by the Powers in 1925. It is as well to remember this fact at a time when there have been so many infringements of law and so many reprisals have been taken.

In former times war was, essentially, an armed contest between combatant forces. To-day, it supposes the total mobilization of all living forces of the nation against the enemy country and it involves the whole population. Warfare has now altered fundamentally owing to recent discoveries and to technical application of them. Mankind is thus faced with a problem of supreme gravity which calls for decisions on the moral plane.

The Geneva Convention gives guarantees to the wounded and sick of the armed forces—just as to their adversaries—that their lives will be protected and that they will have the right to proper care; the Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war watches over the physical and moral situation of those in captivity. The terms of these instruments declare the absolute inviolability of an enemy who is no longer fit for combat and give recognition to the dignity of the human personality.

Protection of the civil population must rest on these same principles. The same applies to the endeavours made by the Red Cross to bring relief supplies of all kinds—foodstuffs, clothing and indispensable medicaments—to women, children and old people in occupied territories. Safeguarding of children is the last line which the Red Cross must defend, if war is not to mean utter destruction of mankind.

From totalitarian war have sprung new techniques. Must it then follow that the individual person will no longer enjoy the protection of the law and that he will thus be considered as a mere pawn in the mass struggle? That would mean the collapse of the principles that are the foundation of international law, which affords physical and moral protection to the human person. Even in time of war, a system of law which is purely expedient, based on self-interest and which serves only the exigence of the moment, could never offer an enduring security.

Unless respect for the significance and dignity of man is sustained, war will inevitably lead to boundless destruction, since the human mind which harnesses the forces of the universe seems, by the mechanisms it contrives, to hasten the onrush of destruction.

The Red Cross ideal, however, endures. It embodies the conception of the significance and dignity of man. It then far transcends the law of nations and the laws of war. It is upon that ideal, using the word in its most profound sense, that human society depends for its survival.

(b) *Particular cases.*

The ICRC received protests from National Red Cross Societies and from Governments that certain bombardments had affected the civil population. In accord with their customary procedure¹, the Committee transmitted these protests either to the National Society of the country accused, or direct to the Government concerned, if they came from an adverse Government.

On March 1, 1944, the Netherlands Red Cross protested to the ICRC against the bombing of Nijmegen, Enschede and Arnhem. This protest was retransmitted to the British and American Red Cross Societies on April 14 of the same year.

To these same National Societies were forwarded, on May 30, 1944, protests dated March 22 and 30, 1944 from the Albanian Red Cross against attacks from low-flying planes and their machine-gunning of Albanian towns. It also, on June 9, 1944 sent on the protest of the French Red Cross, dated April 22,

¹ See above, Part. I, Chapter 6 (C).

1944, against the simultaneous use of direct action and delayed action bombs¹. On May 30, 1944, too, the ICRC transmitted to these two Societies a protest from the Rumanian Red Cross, of April 28, 1944, against the bombing of towns in Rumania.

The British Government stated meanwhile that it would give attention only to protests transmitted by the diplomatic channel of the Protecting Power; it was therefore to the American Red Cross alone that the Committee sent, on September 26, 1944, a fresh protest from the Albanian Red Cross against bombing of the town of Peja.

On June 16, and August 28, 1944, the Albanian Government transmitted to the ICRC, by the intermediary of the German Consulate at Geneva, a protest against the machine-gunning of civilians on the roads and in the fields by Allied airmen. This protest was sent on to the Department of State in Washington on September 15, 1944.

On August 9, 1944 the Belgian Red Cross sent a protest to the ICRC with details of the bombarding of targets in Belgium in June and July 1944. The ICRC decided to transmit it, on September 1, 1944 to the Governments of France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, by the intermediary of their respective diplomatic representatives in Geneva.

On September 5, 1945 the ICRC received from the Syrian Red Crescent a protest against the bombardment of Damascus by the French forces. This protest was, in the usual way, forwarded on September 19, 1945, to the French Red Cross.

A certain number of private persons (well-known people, associations, and others) wrote to the Committee; some called on it to protest to Governments against the bombing of certain places or areas of the country, others to ask it to investigate the origin or the effect of specified bombardments held to be contrary to international law. When it received protests of this kind, the Committee replied that it could only transmit pro-

¹ The ICRC published an article in the "Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge" in September 1944, stressing the increased danger which delayed action bombs cause to the civilian population and to rescue squads, and pointed out that the use of such weapons of war was contrary to the spirit of the Geneva Convention.

tests received from Governments or National Red Cross Societies and, further, that it could only take part in any investigations if asked to do so by all Governments concerned.

A response of that kind was sent, for instance, to a group of French intellectuals who in a letter of May 1943, had protested against the bombing of French towns, to certain leading Rumanians who, during the month of April 1944, had asked the ICRC to protest to the Allies against bombing of the principal towns of Rumania, and to the Archbishop of Malines who had sent a pastoral letter on the matter of bombing in Belgium ¹.

(B). HOSPITAL LOCALITIES AND SECURITY ZONES

1. Historical Introduction

Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, was the first to conceive the idea of hospital and security zones. In 1870 he proposed to the Empress Eugenie the neutralization of a certain number of towns and zones for the accommodation, not only of wounded and sick, but also of civilians, old people and children. Similarly, during the Commune rising in 1871 he strove to find means of protecting women and children resident in Paris from the likely consequences of the town being bombarded by the Government troops, and from the explosions and fires planned by the Commune.

In 1929, General Georges Saint-Paul, of the French Army Medical Corps, advanced the idea, in his turn, that better protection should be ensured in wartime for young children and their mothers, for pregnant women, old people, and the sick and disabled, by sheltering them in security localities or zones away from big towns. It was due to his initiative that the Association " Lieux de Genève ", was founded in 1931 at Geneva, with the purpose of carrying out his plan.

Further, in 1934, giving effect to a recommendation made by the Seventh International Congress of Military Medicine and

Pharmacy, a commission of doctors and legal experts met at Monaco and worked out a preliminary draft Convention (called the Monaco Draft), which contained in particular stipulations that hospital towns and localities should be allocated for the wounded and sick members of the forces, and security towns and localities for use as shelter for certain classes of the civil population. The Monaco Draft was forwarded to the Belgian Government, which contemplated convening a Diplomatic Conference to examine it ; the idea had, however, to be abandoned.

The Fifteenth International Red Cross Conference, held in Tokyo in 1934, recommended that the Monaco Draft should be studied and that the ICRC and National Red Cross Societies "should get in touch with Governments to encourage their efforts for the speedy carrying out of all measures with a view to the protection of both military wounded and sick and of the civilian population".

For their part, the Standing Committee of the International Congresses of Military Medicine and Pharmacy sent the ICRC the Monaco proposals and offered to co-operate in the revision and choice of texts, which might serve as a basis for discussions at a Diplomatic Conference.

Heeding these recommendations, the ICRC convened a Commission of Experts, who sat on October 15 and 16, 1936, and included twenty-seven delegates of National Red Cross Societies, the Committee of the Congresses of Military Medicine and the Save the Children International Union.

The debates revealed a strong current of opinion in favour of the institution of hospital towns, but also made it clear that this problem raised many questions of an essentially military character, which it would be advisable to submit to experts.

Furthermore, it fell to the Commission to express an opinion on the possible extension of the protection contemplated for wounded of the armed forces (hospital towns) to certain classes of the civil population (security localities). The Commission considered such an extension most advisable, but that attention should be given in the first place to the institution of hospital towns—more particularly within the framework of the Geneva Convention and the traditional sphere of Red Cross work—

and that the larger problem of places of security should be left to a later date, when there would be more hope of solving it. The ICRC therefore concentrated its work on the protection of wounded and sick of the armies in the field.

On the basis of the debates of the Commission of October 1936, the Committee worked out draft Articles, to serve as a framework for a Convention for the institution of hospital towns. This draft was laid before National Red Cross Societies in Circular Letter No. 336 ; they were asked to submit it to their Governments with a view to ascertaining the opinion of the General Staffs. The National Societies were also asked to inform the Committee whether their Governments would be willing to delegate a representative to a Commission of military experts, which the Committee intended to convene if they received favourable replies.

The poor response to these approaches, despite repeated attempts, did not warrant the summoning of this Commission. The Committee was therefore unable to do more than to table a provisional report at the Sixteenth International Red Cross Conference, which met in London in 1938.

The Conference renewed the mandate entrusted to the ICRC and expressed the hope that " the International Committee may be able to convoke in the near future a Commission of military experts and experts in international law, with a view to establishing a definite draft which could be submitted forthwith to a Diplomatic Conference for consideration ". It further expressed the hope that, " until such time as a plan of this character may have been put into effect, Governments will consider, as need arises, the possibility of concluding mutual *ad hoc* agreements, providing for the institution of hospital towns and areas ".

In carrying out this mandate the ICRC, in their Circular Letter No. 350, asked National Societies to appoint, in agreement with their Governments, military experts and experts in international law to form a commission for the establishment of a draft convention.

This Commission sat on October 21 and 22, 1938, and consisted of delegates of eighteen States and National Red Cross Societies. The data laid before it comprised the report the ICRC had

presented to the Fifteenth International Red Cross Conference, with the draft Articles established after the discussions of the Preparatory Commission of Experts of October 1936, two draft Conventions tabled by the Yugoslav and Rumanian Red Cross Societies, and the Monaco Draft. Further, M. C. Gorgé, then a Chief Assistant to the Swiss Political Department, had himself framed a draft convention, which the Commission also took as a basis for discussion.

In the light of these various documents the Commission worked out a new draft convention, called the "1938 Draft", and asked the Committee to add a report to it which would serve as commentary. This report, called "Draft Convention for the institution of Hospital Localities and Zones in Time of War" was forwarded to Governments by the Swiss Federal Council in January 1939, in the nature of a preliminary document in preparation for the Diplomatic Conference due to meet at the beginning of 1940 and which was adjourned owing to the war.

2. Endeavours of the ICRC during the Second World War

(a) *General steps.*

It will be remembered that at the outbreak of war the ICRC sent to the belligerent Powers, and later to each State which came into the war, a circular letter informing them that the Committee was fully prepared to play its part in the sphere of humanitarian service, according to its customary role and to the full extent of its powers, to the end that the evils caused by war might be alleviated. The Committee stated it was ready, in particular, to examine the possibility of organizing security zones under the Red Cross emblem and the necessary measures of supervision to be designed if the belligerent Governments, with the object of increasing protection of the civil population, contemplated the institution of such zones.

On September 9, 1939, the ICRC sent the belligerent Governments a memorandum relative to hospital localities and zones. It was suggested the belligerents should either conclude *ad hoc* agreements amongst themselves to implement the 1938

Draft, or at least grant to the enemy medical service, subject to reciprocity and according to methods later to be agreed upon, guarantees similar to those set out in the Draft. The memorandum also raised the question whether, and under what conditions security localities and zones, i.e. those intended to shelter certain classes of the civil population in particular need of protection, might be set up for the duration of the war.

In a new memorandum, of October 21, 1939, concerning the possibility of agreements for the relief of victims of war and to promote the working of army medical services, the ICRC also covered the problem of hospital zones and localities and of security localities and zones. Referring to its memorandum of September 9, 1939, it called attention to the fact that the German Government, subject to reciprocity, was prepared to accept the 1938 Draft. As regards security localities and zones, the Committee asked the belligerent States to inform it upon what conditions they would be prepared to recognize security areas that the other belligerent party might establish on its own territory, even when they themselves did not set up any such zones. It further enquired what guarantees they would be prepared to grant the adverse party, if they did in fact establish these zones. Finally, the ICRC proposed to the belligerent Powers that they should delegate plenipotentiaries who could meet officially or unofficially in neutral territory, for example at Geneva, with the object of negotiating provisional agreements.

These various proposals met with no sign of approval from the Governments concerned, and the Committee was obliged to abandon its efforts in this field.

Over four years had elapsed since the despatch of their last memorandum when the ICRC felt it due that it should make a final attempt. At that time, air warfare had reached a scale and violence hitherto unknown, and the anxiety expressed by the Committee at the outbreak of war was more than justified, that it would prove a scourge to the civil population. Almost every day large numbers of defenceless children, women and old people were buried under the ruins of their homes.

The exceptional gravity of these facts induced the Committee

to send its memorandum of March 15, 1944 to all Governments. This document was covered by an urgent and solemn appeal which, in respect of the five Powers mainly concerned, took the form of a personal letter from the President of the ICRC to the heads of their Governments, in which he begged earnestly that one more effort be made in this cause, while there was yet time.

The motive underlying this fresh attempt on the part of the ICRC lay in the principle of international law which the Committee in particular had championed in its appeal of March 12, 1940. This was the principle according to which the bombing of military objectives alone was permissible, and which should be considered as the governing the rules of air warfare : it was one, it seemed, that was heeded less and less in military operations, thus leading to systematic attacks and the destruction of built-up areas. Bombing from the air, which formerly might be permitted only in the case of certain legitimate targets, was now extended over the whole territory of the enemy ; the logical consequence, by a contrary train of thought, was to fall back once more on the idea of establishing security zones, with immunity from attacks. There was no question of accepting that existing treaties and international law in general could be modified simply by the fact that belligerents now had recourse to new methods of destruction ; the present aim was to find effective means of safeguarding what might still be saved under these new and startling circumstances.

In the mind of the ICRC, the institution of security zones rests on the fundamental principle of the Geneva Convention which from the very beginnings of the Red Cross had been its most considerable endowment : that protection must be provided, even in the fighting areas, for those who have the right to be spared, because they are harmless to the enemy.

The ICRC therefore advocated, in their memorandum of March 15, 1944, the institution of protected zones where the following might find refuge :

- (a) Wounded and sick members of the armed forces (Hospital Zones and Localities, as contemplated in the 1938 Draft).
- (b) Civilian wounded and sick.

(c) Certain classes of the civil population who take no part, not even indirectly, in the fighting, and make not the least contribution to the war potential of the State (children, old people, pregnant women, and women with young children).

In respect of the classes mentioned under (b) and (c), the population of belligerent States and that of occupied territories should be placed on an absolutely equal footing. The ICRC further suggested that study should be given to the placing of certain classes of prisoners of war in security zones.

The ICRC expressed the opinion that the 1938 Draft might serve as a useful basis for the institution of hospital and security zones, even though these zones would offer refuge to larger classes of persons than those which that Draft is designed to cover. Belligerent Powers were therefore asked by the Committee to state their views on the principle of the institution of such zones. If the reply was one of approval, then that Power was asked to inform the adverse party, by any means it considered opportune :

(a) what zones it had in mind to provide protection for the classes of persons in question ;

(b) under what conditions it would agree to recognize the zones instituted by the enemy, with special reference to inspection.

The ICRC pointed out the urgent need of a practical agreement between the States concerned, and expressed the opinion that it was upon them, the States, that it devolved in the first place to indicate the location of the zones they proposed to set up in their territory, or in the territory of countries occupied by them.

Further, the Committee drew their attention to some salient points. Stress was laid, in particular, on the fact that in 1938, the experts had left open the question of night-marking of zones. In the event of a belligerent State deciding to provide the zones with night-marking, by means of suitable lighting, it ought not to take away from the effectiveness of such illuminated markings by lighting other areas that were not hospital or security zones. The ICRC therefore underlined the advantage of placing these

zones, if possible, in immediate neighbourhood to the territory of neutral States, insofar as these did not resort to or maintain a complete black-out. The objection that hospital or security zones might serve as landmarks to the enemy air force would thus be ruled out.

The Committee addressed their memorandum of March 15, 1944 to the Powers in the firm hope that heed would be given to it and that it would see its proposals rapidly achieve a practical result. The ICRC stated that it was at the service of the Governments, if its help was required to promote the conduct of negotiations and in the event, for instance, of the Powers deciding in favour of holding a meeting on neutral territory of their representatives.

The reception which the belligerent Powers gave to the memorandum of March 15, 1944, once more impeded any practical results. Whereas the States replied favourably in principle—mostly only after a long delay—none put into effect the practical and explicit proposals made by the Committee. Furthermore, among the Great Powers mainly concerned, who were chiefly responsible at that time for the conduct of the war, only Germany showed any signs of a positive reaction; the United States and Japan gave a negative reply, and Great Britain and the USSR made no response at all.

In a letter of August 25, 1944, the German Government recalled that its delegates to the Sixteenth International Red Cross Conference in 1938 had explicitly advocated the institution of hospital localities and security zones, and that in October of the same year, the German Government experts and those of the German Red Cross had taken part in the establishment of the 1938 Draft. During the first months of the war, in September and November 1939, the German Government had informed the ICRC that it considered the 1938 Draft to be a suitable basis for discussions with a view to concluding a convention. It also stated its readiness to give favourable consideration to any proposal concerning security zones, and added that, despite present difficulties, it was still prepared to take part in an exchange of views on the subject.

The United States Government, on February 12, 1945, replied

that it would be difficult to determine security zones in Germany which would not contribute, in some way, to that country's war effort, or through which would not run a line of communication constituting a potential military objective. Further, the American Government called attention to the fact that the use by Germany of flying and rocket bombs, which cannot be given precise aim, would deprive the Allied Powers of any advantages they themselves might obtain from such zones.

The Japanese Government pointed out, in a cable of November 22, 1944, that, while approving the Committee's endeavours in principle, it doubted the possibility of creating hospital localities and security zones. This Government advised the ICRC to take up again the principle set forth in the memorandum of March 12, 1940 which recognized only military objectives as legitimate targets for bombing¹, and went on to make some new practical proposals along these lines.

The only Government of the British Commonwealth to reply to the memorandum of March 15, 1944 was that of South Africa ; it declined the proposals.

(b) *Particular cases.*

Besides general negotiations, a certain number of proposals, of a more or less private nature, were laid before the ICRC, all having in mind the establishment of the said zones in specified circumstances.

As a rule, the ICRC was quite unable to make any effective use of these proposals and to forward them to the Powers, because, on the one hand, they did not come from Governments but from Red Cross Societies, local government authorities, or members of the public, and because on the other hand, general negotiations on the principle itself of institution of zones were in progress, and were not yielding very encouraging results. Further, the Committee having by way of experiment sounded the Powers concerned on one of the first of these cases, at a relatively favourable moment, and having met with a refusal,

¹ See above, p. 685.

thought it inadvisable to exhaust the patience of Governments by repeated appeals concerning plans which had no official character and were unrelated one to another.

In each of these cases, the Committee carefully explained the above facts to the authors of the proposals, and it recommended them, in their efforts to secure the institution of special zones, to try to get the formal agreement of the Authorities who held the *de facto* military power in the country. Furthermore, every time it was possible, the Committee informed the competent Authorities of the adverse party of the facts which had come into its hands.

The following is a summary of the principal particular cases submitted to the ICRC :

(1) During the first months of the war, the French army had made Phalsbourg a kind of hospital town, without any railway station, military workshops or depots, and situated at a distance from any railroad. Only members of the medical service had access to it, to the exclusion of all fighting units. The Red Cross emblem was displayed on ambulances, as also in the main square of the town.

The ICRC questioned the French Government on the plan and was told that no particular international importance should be attached to these steps taken by the French Army.

(2) The Central Committee of the Italian Red Cross informed the ICRC in January 1944 of the arrangements made by the local Red Cross Committee of Sienna and the medical institutions of the town to transform it, with the consent of the German and Italian military commandants, into a large hospital centre for military and civilian wounded and sick. The town also took in a great number of refugees. Attention was called to the fact that it contained no military objectives, and that the military barracks would shortly be moved outside. The Vatican had, at this time, also been active with the aim of safeguarding the buildings of Sienna.

As the move of the Italian Red Cross reached the Committee shortly after despatch of the memorandum of March 15, 1944, the ICRC decided to send word of it to the Governments

concerned (Germany, Great Britain, the Royal and the Neo-Fascist Italian Governments, and the United States). In a letter of April 12, 1944, the Royal Italian Government replied that the competent Allied authorities found it impossible to confer the status of an open town on Sienna, as it was a road and rail junction used by the enemy. Nevertheless, it added, measures would be taken to safeguard the hospitals and the art treasures of the town.

(3) In April 1944, the Italian Red Cross asked the ICRC to intervene for the protection of security localities consisting of villages at five to six miles distance from the outskirts of Bologna, in which it was intended to shelter families who had suffered disaster in the bombing of that town. Emblems of neutrality, consisting of squares divided into two triangles, the one yellow and the other black, had been placed on a certain number of houses in these villages.

Later, in February 1945, the ICRC learned from its Delegation in Northern Italy that the German military authorities had organized local police patrols at the gates of Bologna, to prevent the exit of members of the forces who had no special reason for going to the villages.

In both cases the ICRC brought the facts to the notice of the competent Allied authorities.

(4) In August 1944, the Committee received a similar request from the Northern Italian Red Cross regarding the town of Imola, situated near the front, and harbouring close on 5,000 evacuees, wounded and sick, children and old people. The Committee could only, as in the earlier case, inform the Allied authorities of the matter.

(5) In February 1945, the Mayor of Constance proposed that this town should become a hospital and exchange centre for PW and internees repatriated for reasons of health. The Committee sounded the Interallied Military Authorities on the matter and received a favourable reply. The German Government also sent word they would give the matter favourable consideration. The purpose of these negotiations was, however,

outstripped by military events, for at that moment the town was occupied, without resistance, by the French forces.

(6) The Norwegian Red Cross in Oslo informed the ICRC, in March 1945, of proposals to secure recognition of Tromsø as a security locality. This town is on an island, and its houses are built of wood. Overcrowded with refugees and without any means of evacuation, the slightest bombing would have been a serious catastrophe for the civil population. There again, the ICRC brought the facts to the notice of the Allied Authorities.

(7) Also in March 1945, certain neutral Governments, on the advice of their consular representatives in Shanghai, suggested to the belligerent Governments concerned that a security zone be instituted in that town, on the grounds of the overcrowding in the built-up areas and the impossibility of evacuating the population, or even of digging shelters in that kind of soil.

The ICRC supported this proposal and placed its own services and those of its Delegation at the service of all parties, if they were required.

The Committee learned subsequently, that the Chinese Government had ruled out the possibility of setting up a security zone in Shanghai, in view of the prevailing situation in China.

(8) The ICRC learned that other endeavours to institute hospital or security zones had been made in behalf of Beauvais, Bregenz, Hauteville, Lindau, Prague and Vienna. These plans came, however, to nothing.

(c) *Declaration of Open Towns.*

According to the accepted traditions of war on land, an "open town" was a town or a place which offered no resistance to an invading army, owing to the fact that it was not fortified or was without armed forces. By occupying it, the attacking army prevented their adversary from putting it to immediate use, military or otherwise.

Technical developments of modern warfare have, however,

considerably modified this conception of an "open town". The new arms consisting of aircraft, long-range artillery and rockets make it possible to attack objectives far behind the fighting line and to reduce them for a certain length of time. An open town, in these circumstances, would be a town or a place harbouring no military objectives, and such that a belligerent could give guarantee to the adverse party that it would not be made to serve any military purposes until the end of the war, or at least till the fighting ceased in the district under discussion.

This is, however, an entirely theoretical point of view, the range of which is more than ever limited by recent experience. It must be remembered that the very concept of an "open town" must lose all meaning, if belligerents consider bombardment of towns permissible, even when they have no immediate military or strategic value, or if they carry out destructions out of all proportion to the extent and value of military objectives within such areas, or if, in other words, the main purpose of such destruction is to reduce the enemy's economic potential or to undermine his morale.

It did, however, happen during the recent war, described as "total", that certain towns were spared, owing to an independent decision of the attacker, or to an agreement, may be a tacit one, arrived at between the opposing sides (for example as regards Athens, Rome and Paris). These facts are an illustration of voluntary limitation of means of warfare otherwise considered as admissible; they are less the result of humane considerations which, by their nature, would be applicable in all circumstances, than of political and military measures taken in concrete and specific cases.

The ICRC, for its part, was requested several times during the recent war to use its good offices with the belligerents in order that certain localities might be declared open towns. The Committee was obliged to decline, as these requests were mainly of a political or military nature and would have taken it quite outside its proper sphere of action.

The Committee agreed, nevertheless, because of the exceptional circumstances, to act as intermediary in the case

of the city of Lyons. The Lyons branch of the French Red Cross had asked the ICRC, in a letter of August 30, 1944, to make some effective intervention to ensure that Lyons, which had over 700,000 inhabitants and which had suffered severely from bombing, might be declared an open town. This request had most urgent support in a letter from the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons and another from the Pastor President of the Twelfth Region of the Reformed Church of France. Since there was no Protecting Power, the ICRC transmitted the request of the Lyons French Red Cross to the American, British, French and German High Commands with its own endorsement. The question was, however, rapidly overtaken by military events.

On another occasion too, during fighting in Budapest which caused heavy losses among the civil population, the Committee suggested to the Governments concerned that a local armistice be concluded which would permit the evacuation of non-combatants. This proposal came to nothing and became pointless shortly afterwards, when the town was completely occupied.

(C). EVACUATION OF CIVIL POPULATIONS

During the 1941-42 winter, when famine was rife in Greece, infant mortality rose to an alarming figure. The ICRC, as a result, received pressing appeals from various sources, to help check the death-rate by the mass removal of children, mainly from *Athens* and the *Piraeus*, where the situation was becoming desperate. The Egyptian Government, supported by that of Great Britain, offered to receive 5,000 children, of whom a number would have been transferred from Egypt to South Africa; the Greek colonies, very large in both these countries, would have done their best to assist these young exiles. Beyrouth was prepared to take in a thousand, and Turkey made a similar proposal.

The Committee approached the Italian Authorities, who at once agreed. It also considered the possibility of evacuating children to Switzerland with the co-operation of the Swiss Red Cross. Negotiations with Egypt had almost been completed

when the Greek Red Cross raised serious objections concerning the Egyptian climate and the even greater obstacle of the opposition of parents, who feared to be separated from their children. The plan was therefore given up after months of negotiations.

In October 1944, the representatives in Switzerland of the Provisional Government of the French Republic asked the ICRC to approach the German Command in order to obtain, on the Vosges front, a short local truce during which the civil population of *Gerardmer*, some 5,000, including 1,400 children, might be evacuated towards the west. As a result of military operations, then in progress, these people were completely cut off and without food. The Germans had already begun to evacuate them by force towards the east in very distressing conditions. The ICRC at once took the requisite action and proposed to send a delegate to the spot to ensure keeping of the truce by both sides. Shortly afterwards, however, the arrangement became unnecessary, as the French troops took possession of the Gerardmer position.

In December 1944, the ICRC was asked by the Netherlands Red Cross, which had the sanction of the German Occupation Authorities, to negotiate with the Allied High Command for the evacuation to Limburg or Brabant of the population of *Venlo-Roermond*, a district where military operations were in full progress. There again, the rapid development of military events made the proposed scheme needless.

Shortly after, at the beginning of 1945, the Committee offered to co-operate in the proposed evacuation of about one thousand sick residents of the *Channel Islands*. The execution of this plan was delayed; the German Authorities endeavoured to make it conditional on a similar measure whereby 200 wounded German members of the forces, whom it was impossible to treat properly in the Islands, might be evacuated. In the end, the German capitulation took place before the question could be settled.

The ICRC were able to do most useful work in behalf of the civil population shut up in the *St. Nazaire* pocket. The delegate sent to France (December 1944-May 1945) on the special mission of organizing food supplies for the population of the Atlantic coast pockets occupied by the German forces,

was able to carry out, in February 1945, the removal of some 2,000 civilian volunteers of the St. Nazaire district. This operation was accomplished by trains running during short truces concluded between the two belligerents through the intermediary of the Committee's representative. A similar evacuation was contemplated for the Lorient pocket, but the capitulation of the German troops made it unnecessary.

Also in February 1945, the Municipal Council of *Vienna* submitted to the ICRC Delegation there, the plan of evacuating 180,000 children to the Vorarlberg and to Switzerland. Vienna was threatened by the approach of the fighting ; it was suffering daily air attacks, and the food problem was growing. Also, the towns and villages behind the lines were overcrowded by the thousands of fugitives who had fled the bombed regions of Germany and of the Balkans. The Committee was asked to provide huts to be erected in the territory adjacent to Switzerland. The ICRC broached the question with the Swiss Relief Fund, which had no huts available, but which offered to look after 3,000 children for three to six months. This alternative scheme was put through with the co-operation of the Swiss Red Cross.

In March 1945, the population of *Lörrach*, near Basle, informed the Committee of its wish to be evacuated to Switzerland because of the incessant bombing to which it was exposed from the Allies during their advance in the Black Forest. With the destruction of railways, this town was completely isolated and without food supplies. The military situation developed so rapidly, however, that the ICRC had no time to reply to this appeal.

To close this chapter, mention may be made of the fact that the Committee also lent the services of its Delegations in various countries (France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany) to assist the schemes for the reception of children in Switzerland, which were undertaken on a large scale by the Swiss Relief Fund and the Swiss Red Cross during and after the War ¹.

¹ As regards the steps taken by the Committee for the evacuation of Jews, see above, Chapter 6 (A).

(D). PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN HOSPITALS

Long before the second World War, the ICRC had been giving its attention to the question of the juridical protection of civilian hospitals. These hospitals are not, in fact, covered by the Geneva Convention, but only by a few very inadequate provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1907 (Art. 27 and 56 of the Regulations and Art. 5 of the Ninth Convention). In this connection, the Committee had circulated a report to the National Red Cross Societies in 1937; this was to serve as supporting document for the use of Commission of Experts set up to examine the question of revising the Geneva Convention.

During the War, the Committee was frequently consulted on the protection and distinctive marking of civilian hospitals. It was compelled to point out that these hospitals were not covered by the Geneva Convention and had not the right to display the emblem of the Red Cross. Certain States militarized some of their civilian hospitals in order to bring them within the scope of the Convention. The Committee therefore drew their attention to a second condition which would have to be fulfilled at the same time, if such a scheme was to be given recognition by the enemy—i.e., that hospitals so militarized should be used really, at least in part, for sick and wounded of the armed forces.

In 1943, the Government of Ceylon took the lead in displaying on its civilian hospitals an emblem consisting of a red square placed in the centre of a white one and covering one-ninth of its surface. Early in 1945 the Governments of the Reich, Northern Italy, and Slovakia informed the Powers with which they were at war, either through the Protecting Power, or through the Committee, that they would henceforth display on their civilian hospitals a red square in the centre of a white circle. The British and United States Governments stated that they would recognize this emblem.

The ICRC also received from National Red Cross Societies protests alleging the bombardment of civilian hospitals and sanatoria. In accordance with its customary practice, it had

thus to forward protests to the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR (referring to Finnish hospitals), and also to the Red Cross Societies of Germany, Great Britain and Italy, concerning the hospitals of La Panne (Belgium) and those of Larissa and Janina (Greece). The Committee also took steps to safeguard from bombardment the French hospitals of Berck-Plage—the “hospital town”. This danger was averted, however, by the change in the military situation.

The Committee did not neglect the interests of civilian hospitals in enemy or enemy-occupied territories. Its intervention was requested by a German Red Cross clinic at Windhoek (South Africa), to save its funds from confiscation as enemy property. In this the Committee was happily forestalled by the South African Red Cross, which arranged for the clinic to carry on its work without hindrance.

The Committee's delegation in Hungary, when the tide of war approached that country, took action on the spot in behalf of the hospitals, dispensaries, clinics and maternity hospitals. First of all, it persuaded the Hungarian authorities not to remove these establishments to Germany, as they had previously decided to do, but to allow them to be carried on for the benefit of civilian sick and wounded. It then took them under its protection, had lists of the hospital staffs displayed on the notice-boards, and issued to the three thousand members of the hospital staffs credential cards in four languages.

Immediately at the end of hostilities the Committee applied itself to the framing of provisions within a Convention which would cover fully and precisely the status of civilian hospitals and accord them the same measure of protection as that enjoyed by military hospitals.

VIII. Medical Assistance

(A). CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIGHT AGAINST EPIDEMICS

On January 28, 1943 the "Allied Red Cross Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Epidemics" sent a memorandum to the ICRC, suggesting that research be started forthwith into the proper medical means of combating any deterioration which might occur in the health of the population in the liberated countries. It proposed that all available information on areas of epidemics in Europe be collected and that, in agreement with the National Red Cross Societies, stocks of medical stores be assembled either in Switzerland, at Geneva, or in some other neutral country. It further suggested that the funds required to purchase materials for medical assistance be raised by an appeal to Governments, Red Cross Societies and voluntary health organizations.

In order to examine these proposals, the ICRC arranged two meetings, presided over by the President of the ICRC and held on November 23 and 26, 1943, in Geneva. To these were invited a number of experts (well-known professors and bacteriologists), the Senior M.O. of the Swiss Red Cross and representatives of the Health Section of the League of Nations. The various medical and health problems affecting the civilian populations, both during the war and after the end of the fighting, were studied in principle and on broad lines, particularly the creation, instruction and equipment of medical missions and the supply of health equipment, instruments and disinfectants.

Furthermore, on August 25 and 29, 1944, the ICRC turned to the Red Cross Societies in the belligerent and neutral countries

and drew their attention to the fact that, in spite of the precautionary measures taken in all countries, contagious diseases—propagated by the movements of population—might develop in certain parts of Europe, both during hostilities and in the immediate post-war period.

To meet these risks, the ICRC suggested that the Red Cross Societies of the neutral countries should consider the preparing of medical teams which could go to neighbouring countries, should the need arise, subject to the permission of the governments concerned, taking with them first aid to the national-Red Cross Society of the country in distress. The ICRC made clear that each individual Red Cross Society was to determine the amount and the kind of help that it wanted to give. As an example, it suggested the formation and training of a staff of specialists in epidemiology, as a nucleus for future medical teams, which would be composed of doctors and nurses, and be provided with the necessary medicines, serums and vaccines.

The Red Cross Societies of Australia, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Germany and Spain responded to this appeal by informing the ICRC that they had arranged for the training of an adequate medical staff and were ready to contribute towards any humanitarian scheme of this kind.

(B). TRAINING COURSES FOR DOCTORS AND NURSES

The Swiss Red Cross, with the support of the ICRC, undertook to prepare assistance of the same kind. Under the auspices of the ICRC, this Society trained a number of doctors, nurses and technical workers in readiness for the fight against epidemics and for work in groups or individually in the areas affected by the war.

The ICRC, for its part, endeavoured to obtain the collaboration of specially qualified professors in Switzerland, chosen from the medical faculties of the Universities, to train this medical staff. The great majority of those taking the course had no special experience of epidemic work. The purpose of the

course was, however, not to train specialists, but only to refresh and complete their knowledge of the subject.

The theoretical courses dealt with the etiology, epidemiology and prophylaxy of plague, typho-paratyphoid, bacillary dysentery, scarlatina, diphtheria, influenza, penumonia and small-pox. Other courses were given on exanthematic typhus and its treatment, cerebro-spinal meningitis, etc. The participants could also acquaint themselves with the technique of destroying insect-pests and vermin, and of disinfection. They also had opportunities of taking blood and "goutte épaisse" from patients suffering from malaria.

Altogether five days of instruction were given: two days for doctors (one in Berne in July 1944 and the other in Zurich in October 1944), two courses for nurses at the same time (in Geneva and Basle) and a course for technical workers in Zurich. The courses were attended by 198 doctors, 211 nurses and 69 technical assistants. In this way, the Swiss Red Cross, in contact with the ICRC, was able to form teams trained as far as possible to meet the medical needs of the civil populations.

Mention should also be made of the visit of Brigadier-General Fox, a specialist on exanthematic typhus in the American Army. When passing through Geneva, he put forward some suggestions, upon which the ICRC (together with representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies, the Joint Relief Commission, the American Red Cross and some eminent Swiss bacteriologists) carefully studied the advantages which the various national Red Cross Societies might derive, if a representative from their country were invited to learn the new methods of combating exanthematic typhus. The ICRC decided to arrange for an advanced course under the direction of a professor, who was a specialist on the subject.

As it turned out, this course proved not to be so necessary, because thanks to General Fox it had been possible to organize similar courses in Germany for the German medical staff, and in Poland and Rumania. Moreover, the USA Typhus Commission gave courses of instruction on the use of DDT, which were attended by representatives from all the departments of France, and by medical officers from the Colonies.

In the British and American Zones of Germany, UNRRA was responsible for combating infections and contagious diseases.

As time went on, fresh suggestions were made to the ICRC, with a view to enlarging the field covered by these courses. Proposals were made that malaria, poliomyelitis, the detection and diagnosis of cases of typhoid and para-typhoid, bacillary dysentery, scabies, the use of sulphamides, etc., be included in the course. This course was to form, in fact, a summary of recent progress in this particular field. The aim was also to call in professors of foreign nationality who were specialists. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to collect the large sum of money required for carrying out this project, and although the Committee approached other organizations on the matter, the idea had to be definitely dropped and the proposed course was not held.

(C). MEDICAL MISSIONS

1. In Germany

(a) *Investigations teams (July-August 1945).*

Immediately war ended, the ICRC, in association with the Swiss Red Cross, organized teams to go to Germany. The purpose of these missions was to study (in collaboration with the occupying Authorities) the position and state of health of the persons of various nationalities who remained in the camps in that country, and what measures could be taken for their good.

Three teams were organized ; each included several members, among them a delegate of the ICRC and a doctor from the Swiss Red Cross, which also supplied the cars and women drivers, and thus bore the largest share of the expense involved.

The first team was to go to the South, the second to the Centre, and the third to the North of Germany. The first team returned to Geneva by the appointed date, at the end of July, after having visited the camps in Bavaria. The third returned at the beginning of August, bringing information concerning

Displaced Persons in the big camps in the Rhineland and in Schleswig. The second team was faced by tasks of particular difficulty. It kept in continuous contact with the authorities responsible at that time for Displaced Persons, to discover, in agreement with them, the most effective means of helping the DP. To facilitate its work, it split into two sections; one of these went to the French Zone, while the other visited the American Zone chiefly and also the British Zone. This team did not return to Geneva until the end of August.

The delegates and doctors all asked that immediate action be taken to help the Displaced Persons in Germany, who were prevented by circumstances from returning to their country. During the winter of 1945-46 the camps had to accommodate a very large number of displaced persons, nearly a million in the British Zone, over 600,000 in the American Zone and 80,000 in the French Zone, without counting all those who lived outside the camps. The administration of the camps was in the hands of UNRRA, but they remained under the partial control of the Military Government and of the National Red Cross Societies, until UNRRA could arrange to carry out the huge task it had just undertaken (engagement of adequate staff, transport of material and food, etc.). During this transition period, other institutions had to concentrate on the most urgent problems, and bring these thousands of people the necessary aid, which according to the reports of doctors and delegates consisted mainly of :

Material Help: improvement of the arrangements within the camps, especially of the kitchens; distribution of dietetic products, cereals for children, warm clothing and shoes, layettes, children's clothes, cigarettes, etc.

Intellectual Help: supply of school books and educational works, equipment for teaching small children.

Medical Help: distribution of medical supplies, detection of tuberculous persons living in overcrowded camps ¹.

¹ For the practical realisation of these plans, 'see Vol. III, Part III, chap. 4, and Part. I, chap. 1.

(b) *Teams for the detection of tuberculosis in camps for Displaced Persons in Germany (autumn 1945 and throughout 1946).*

Detection in the British Zone. — The teams had not yet returned to Geneva to report on their investigations, when the Committee received a request from the chief Medical Officer of UNRRA in the British Zone, dated August 3, 1945, that a medical mission be sent equipped with two X-ray appliances, in order to detect tuberculosis among the internees in camps for Displaced Persons, who numbered over a million in that zone.

After a thorough study of the question, and after receiving an assurance that the persons thus diagnosed as tuberculous would be isolated and taken to hospital, the Committee asked for the help of two Swiss doctors, who responded and even consented to lend their own microphotographic apparatus and to take their own staff with them to Germany. The Swiss Relief Fund agreed to finance this work, and the Swiss Red Cross took responsibility for the technical arrangements. On the other hand, all the formalities with the responsible authorities rested with the ICRC—the only body allowed to intervene in Germany at that time.

The teams left Switzerland on October 19, 1945, complete with equipment. They worked for four weeks in the two camps of Bergen-Belsen and Fallingbostel, near Hanover, where they examined about 20,000 persons. Among these they discovered over 500 unsuspected consumptives, whom it was possible to send to hospital.

Detection of tuberculosis in the American Zone. — On October 11, 1945, the headquarters of UNRRA in the American Zone asked the Committee to co-operate in the fight against tuberculosis in the camps for displaced persons in that zone. The plan included the detecting of tuberculosis in the camps, arrangements for patients to be taken into hospital, their treatment, and in general all the measures which come within the province of a public health service and of an anti-tuberculosis department.

As the expeditions undertaken by the investigating teams sent to the British Zone had shown the usefulness of such work, the three organizations which had participated now examined the possibility of undertaking similar action in the American Zone, provided that the representatives of the ICRC obtained guarantees from the responsible authorities :

(1) that the necessary propaganda work would be undertaken in good time among the persons who were to be X-rayed, so that as many as possible of them would agree to be examined;

(2) that the transfer of displaced persons would be suspended in all camps, during the X-ray examinations ;

(3) that technical assistance would be given to the Swiss teams in the shape of suitable installations and assistant staff ;

(4) that diagnosis would be followed up by taking patients to hospital and giving them treatment.

The new teams also required proper apparatus and equipment. While travelling in Germany, the medical delegate of the ICRC learnt of some new Siemens apparatus on the spot, and obtained permission from the American authorities to purchase two of these, which he placed at the disposal of the teams. The delegate also secured for the ICRC, free of charge, a stock of films and valves, and additional material for the secretariat and for developing the films. At his request, UNRRA lent two trucks for transporting the apparatus and the material. These trucks were fitted with dark-rooms, which greatly helped the work. These different facilities obtained by the Red Cross enabled it to halve its expenses.

The Swiss Red Cross undertook the entire technical organization of the teams and engaged the staff. Each team consisted of one doctor, one photographer, one technical assistant and one woman driver, who also did the secretarial work. As the teams continued their work for nearly a year, the staff of the Swiss Red Cross had to be replaced several times, so that fourteen doctors succeeded one another as heads of the teams, all of them specialists in pulmonary diseases, internal medicine, or radiology. The Swiss Relief Fund bore the costs.

Two teams left in February 1946, and up to the end of the year had visited 75 camps, in which they examined about 200,000 persons.

When the teams had finished their task, several organizations asked the ICRC for permission to use its microphotographic apparatus. One was lent temporarily to the University of Tübingen, in the French Zone, and the other to the Medical Association of Hessen, at Frankfurt-on-Main.

2. Team in Bergen-Belsen Camp and in the Netherlands

In March 1945, the British Red Cross requested the ICRC, through its representative in Belgium, to send a team of qualified doctors and nurses to Holland, to undertake health work on the same lines as that carried out by the British Red Cross in the liberated part of that country. The ICRC immediately got into touch with the Swiss Red Cross, the necessary steps were taken without delay, and on May 2 a team composed of six doctors and twelve nurses left Geneva for the Netherlands, in an aeroplane supplied by the British Red Cross. However, shortly afterwards, the Committee was advised by the British Red Cross that it was not possible at that moment for the Swiss team to go to North Holland. In order to avoid wasting the excellent material placed at its disposal by the Swiss Red Cross and the ICRC, the British Red Cross asked the Swiss doctors and nurses to join the six British Red Cross teams which were working in the camp at Belsen, where there were 40,000 internees, most of them ill, and 10,000 unburied corpses.

Owing to the shortage of staff, the Swiss doctors could not work there as a team, but were spread over the different parts of the camp, where they acted as senior physicians. Soon after their arrival, and partly owing to their valuable assistance, the death rate fell perceptibly.

Towards the end of May, two doctors and five nurses went to Holland, at the request of the British Red Cross. They worked first at a hospital at Amsterdam, and then in a receiving-centre for repatriates, not far from Dortmund, in the hospitals at Hilversum and in a camp for repatriated Dutch citizens at

Amersfoort, where all the repatriates underwent a radioscopic examination.

On July 26, the team completed its work and returned to Switzerland.

3. Teams in Central and Southern Italy

In December 1944, the Italian Red Cross advised the Committee through its delegation in Rome that the responsible Italian authorities were anxious for Swiss medical teams to visit the provinces of Viterbo, Terni, Perugia and Teramo, where there was a danger of epidemics.

The Committee decided that it was necessary first of all to send a doctor to the places in question. It would be his task to furnish the ICRC with full information concerning the work to be done, to decide how many doctors and nurses would be required, and also to look into methods for financing the undertaking.

The information collected in this way was passed on to the Swiss organizations in a position to give their support.

On this basis the Swiss Relief Fund organized medical teams which did useful work in Italy ; it also sent relief supplies.

4. Teams in Northern Italy

On April 24 and 25, 1945, the Committee was advised by its delegates in Northern Italy that as a result of the liberation of the concentration camps by the Allied troops in Germany, a large number of internees, mostly Italians, were returning to Italy on foot through the Austrian Alps. Of these refugees, 75,000 (of whom 50,000 had tuberculosis), had already arrived in the district of Merano-Bolzano, where they were completely devoid of the most urgent medical aid. Thousands of other refugees were wandering to the North of the Italo-Austrian frontier, absolutely destitute.

This information was confirmed by the Swiss Consular agent at Merano, and by the German Consul in the same town, who suggested that the Committee should speed up the transport

of the relief which could be sent from Switzerland by sending it in trucks belonging to the German Red Cross.

The ICRC at once informed the Italian authorities of the situation. It asked for the help of the relief organisations ; the Swiss Relief Fund gave financial support and the Swiss Red Cross offered its medical staff.

A team of eleven persons was formed. It included three doctors (one of whom was a medical delegate representing the ICRC), one nurse, three women assistants, two cooks and two drivers. The Italian Red Cross offered 40,000 food parcels, each weighing four kilogrammes, which were stored in Switzerland. The Swiss Relief Fund undertook to defray almost the whole cost of the team and supplied most of the relief stores.

The ICRC was made responsible for the work ; it took the necessary measures to collect the relief supplies, made the administrative arrangements, solved the difficult problem of transport, and established contacts, first with the German Authorities, and then after fighting ceased, with the American and Italian Authorities.

Bolzano. — The team arrived at Bolzano on May 13, 1945. After reaching an agreement with the local people in charge of the Italian Red Cross, it organized a receiving-centre for the refugees who were now crossing the Brenner by truck, in a big hospital, made over to the team by the military authorities. Its task there was to give the refugees a medical examination, to register and feed them, before letting them continue their journey. Those who were ill were admitted to hospital and given attention.

On May 22, this centre was placed under the direction of an Allied military medical officer, assisted by a local Red Cross Committee.

After the arrival of the Swiss team at Bolzano, the Allied Military Government made arrangements for the transfer of 1,300,000 Displaced Persons who wished to return to Italy. The transport of these persons was to be carried out through three routes, to the south of which receiving-centres would be set up :

- (a) at Resia, between Landeck and Malles,
- (b) on the Brenner, between Innsbruck and Bolzano,
- (c) in the valley of the Drau, between Linz and San Candido.

Several cases of exanthematic typhus had broken out in the Innsbruck district. The American Red Cross and the Military Government established by the Fifth Army, seeing the Swiss team at work at Bolzano, requested the Committee on May 19, 1945, to send them two DDT disinfection teams for Innsbruck and San Candido, and also asked a team be got ready which could be sent with all speed to Malles.

The teams which were sent to Innsbruck and San Candido in response to this appeal, gave up their work, however, because in Innsbruck the Americans had already organized several disinfection centres, and at San Candido the main road was now only used by a few occasional refugees.

Malles. — The team which had organized the Centre at Bolzano was reinforced and sent to Malles, in order to set up an additional receiving-centre, to accommodate 2,000 people, and a hospital with 200 beds. This centre was to serve especially as an isolation camp for repatriated persons, who had just left concentration camps.

Like San Candido, Malles was abandoned as a repatriation route, and the receiving-camp which had been installed by the Americans was no longer used. However, as a considerable number of the repatriates were ill, the hospital of Malles took in about 60 serious cases, mostly tubercular and in a very advanced state of denutrition.

Merano. — The Committee's delegate then enquired of the American and the Italian authorities, if a Swiss team would still be of service. He was requested to ask the Swiss Red Cross to take over a hospital of 1000 beds at Merano for three to six months. The delegate studied this proposition on the spot and at the same time wound up the hospital at Malles, from which the last patients were removed on July 27.

The Swiss Red Cross undertook the responsibility for organizing and managing the new hospital at Merano and obtained finan-

cial assistance from the Swiss Relief Fund. The delegate of the ICRC introduced the representatives of the Swiss Red Cross to the various responsible Authorities. The service of the ICRC as intermediary was then no longer needed, and it was able to withdraw.

5. Teams in Yugoslavia

In the summer of 1945 the Committee learned that the number of Yugoslav doctors and nursing staff was most inadequate, and that the Government of Yugoslavia would welcome the help of Swiss doctors.

The ICRC sent a delegate to Yugoslavia and instructed him to investigate in which district or districts the Swiss doctors should work, the number of patients to be treated daily, the kind of medical equipment required for the teams, the health situation and the assistance which might be required for Displaced Persons in Yugoslavia. The delegate was responsible for collecting information on the campaign against venereal diseases, the possibility of repatriating serious cases or taking them to hospital, and the arrangements made by the Authorities, or by the competent organisations, relating to Yugoslav disabled ex-service men.

The delegate took with him medical supplies sent by the Italian Red Cross for the Italian PW in Yugoslavia, and medical supplies, food and clothing for the civil population.

The report received from this delegate was sent by the Committee in the usual way to those Swiss welfare organizations which seemed in a position to give help to the Yugoslav population. The work which was then carried out there was the result of the preliminary steps taken by the ICRC.

Furthermore, the ICRC entrusted a specialist professor of medicine (who had been asked to join the medical team sent to Yugoslavia by the Swiss section of the International Health Centre) with a quantity of medicaments drawn from its own stocks, which were distributed in Yugoslavia. This specialist also brought back a number of valuable reports on the epidemic of exanthematic typhus which was raging in Yugoslavia.

(D). ASSISTANCE IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

One of the alarming results of the war was a marked spread of tuberculosis in the devastated countries. The ICRC began to study effective means of combating this scourge; however, as it had no resources at its disposal for large-scale action, it could only give limited assistance, which may be summarized as follows:

(a) The ICRC instructed its representatives to enquire into the needs of consumptives in the countries devastated by the war. It then circulated their reports as widely as possible, as also reports derived from other sources. It tried to extend the efforts being made throughout the world to combat tuberculosis, by appeals launched in conjunction with other international organizations, and by approaching philanthropic organizations in order to obtain their practical help.

(b) From 1945 on, the ICRC helped to form teams to undertake X-ray examinations, and placed two X-ray sets at the disposal of the medical teams, by means of which 200,000 people suffering from tuberculosis in Germany were examined¹.

(c) The ICRC devoted much time and thought to schemes for taking tuberculous patients into hospital where they could have adequate treatment, and also to means for diminishing the risk of infection in their neighbourhood. It made several plans for sending patients to hospitals abroad, especially to Switzerland. These schemes however, came to nothing because of the lack of funds. In reply to numerous applications, the Committee could only give information, make appeals for funds, and endorse requests sent to other welfare organizations.

(d) The ICRC on certain occasions set on foot projects for equipping sanatoria to which it sent serums and medical supplies. An appeal to various organizations produced a quantity of woollen blankets supplied by the "Union Suisse de Charité". These were handed to the Joint Relief Commission, to be sent to Freiburg-in-Breisgau, for use in hospitals for tuberculous patients.

¹ See above, p. 715.

(E). MEDICAL INFORMATION

In March 1946, the Medical Division of the ICRC began to publish a multigraphed monthly medical journal in French, entitled "*Documentation médicale*". The purpose of this publication was to circulate information about new therapeutics and new medicines among doctors who were prisoners of war and other practitioners who, owing to circumstances, were cut off from the information essential to their work. The Medical Division read the various medical reviews which it received monthly, and reproduced the articles which it considered most interesting. By the end of June 1947, twelve numbers had appeared. Judging from the numerous testimonials received, this journal seems to be of real service ¹.

The Medical Division also endeavoured to assist doctors and specialists who wished to submit the results of their discoveries to the judgment of the ICRC. In a general way, it tried to keep fully and quickly informed of all recent discoveries, by keeping up-to-date the information it was able to obtain through current publications, and the ICRC radio monitoring service.

(F). WORK IN BEHALF OF THE DISABLED

One of the traditional tasks of the ICRC has always been the care of the war-disabled. Until recently, government authorities were able to give the necessary assistance to their own disabled nationals—nearly all of them military personnel—and the ICRC could therefore confine itself to those exceptional cases for whom such assistance was not available.

The situation changed greatly, however, during the second World War. Owing to the development in weapons, the civil populations had to endure hardships which formerly affected combatants alone. When the number of disabled reached a

¹ The ICRC has published other medical studies, notably on the state health of the civil populations. See Vol. III, Part IV, chapter 1.

high figure, the government authorities of certain devastated countries which lacked resources, were unable in spite of much endeavour, to ensure means of existence and adequate care to all those persons, military or civilian, who had become disabled as a result of hostilities.

Anxious to make its contribution in this field, the ICRC created in 1944 a Service for Disabled Persons, which was attached to the Medical Division at the time of its formation in 1946.

The first task undertaken by this Service was that of compiling data which should be as complete as possible. It sought all the material required for a thorough grasp of the subject, and in 1945 sent out an enquiry to all the belligerent and neutral States who were parties to the Geneva Convention. Its purpose was to discover how they regarded the problems connected with assistance to, and re-education of war-disabled persons. A note and a questionnaire were sent, through the delegates of the Committee, to the responsible government authorities and to the national Red Cross Societies.

About 30 countries, including the most important ones, responded. Their replies were published by the Committee in July 1946, in a preliminary French edition entitled *Documentation relative à l'assistance aux invalides de guerre*¹. The pamphlet reproduced the substance of the replies sent in to the questionnaire, and remarks on matters arising therefrom.

Apart from the data relating to disabled persons, some of the replies received also gave information about war-widows and orphans. Others answered the question on a broader basis, and described the psychological and economic problems involved in the social and vocational rehabilitation of demobilised military personnel and able-bodied repatriates.

The Committee published these documents in the hope that the comparative study of the methods advocated would lead the responsible authorities of certain countries to extend their schemes for disabled persons, when they realised what was being

¹ An extract from this appeared in the *Revue internationale* (August 1945).

done elsewhere. Moreover, this study should enable the Medical Division to determine what measures should be undertaken ¹.

The preparation of a publication of this kind presented certain difficulties. The questionnaire was drawn up with great care, not so much with a view to obtaining precise replies to each question, but in order to give some guidance in framing the answers. In spite of this, the variety of the replies—due to the particular way in which each nation regards these matters and to the different languages used—involved a great deal of sub-editing, in order to achieve a certain unity of form.

The experience gained in publishing the preliminary French edition led the ICRC to modify the general lay-out of the pamphlet for the English edition. The English edition gives all the replies from each country one after the other ; the French edition prints all the replies to each question together.

The Committee had hoped to receive a quantity of scientific data concerning assistance to and reeducation of disabled persons ; but this was not the case. The progress made in this field during the war, or post-war period, is still too recent for any detailed studies to have been published at the time of writing.

The data collected as the result of this enquiry was completed with the help of printed books and other documents (pamphlets, legal texts, technical works, medical journals, documentary films). The films are of particular value for the rehabilitation and vocational training of the disabled.

These data were worked into the above-mentioned pamphlet and also into articles published in the "*Revue internationale*" and elsewhere. It also served as a basis for appeals sent out in behalf of disabled persons ; it will be used for papers drawing public attention to their position, for considered replies to the numerous requests received from specialized organizations or from individuals asking for information on some particular point in reference to the work of assisting or re-educating the disabled.

¹ See Vol. III, Part III.

The ICRC had been approached by national associations for the disabled, complaining of the inadequacy of pensions. These appeals have been sent to the authorities concerned.

In its work for the disabled, the ICRC was greatly helped by the support and co-operation of the national Red Cross Societies, and especially of the League, which is itself doing important work in this field. The Committee has also kept in touch with Pro Infirmis, the World's Y.M.C.A., the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the World Council of Churches, the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad and the International Labour Office.

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XVIIth INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

Stockholm, August 1948

REPORT

of the
International Committee of the Red Cross
on its activities
during the Second World War
(September 1, 1939-June 30, 1947)

VOLUME II

THE CENTRAL AGENCY FOR
PRISONERS OF WAR



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INTRODUCTION

ORIGIN AND FOUNDATION

The experience of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the service of prisoners of war is relatively recent. Whereas the Committee encouraged and sanctioned the formation in Basle, in 1870, of an information bureau for PW in addition to the official Agency for wounded combatants, and while its Belgrade Agency in 1912 worked for prisoners of war as well as for the sick and wounded, it was the International Prisoners of War Agency, opened in Geneva in 1914, which first gave the Committee the opportunity of dealing with the vast and complex problem of ensuring protection to prisoners of war, civilian internees and civil populations, of supplying information about them and of reaching them with relief.

In 1914, the only guide which the ICRC had in the new task it was undertaking, was the few lines of a resolution of the Ninth International Red Cross Conference held in Washington in 1912, which applied rather to National Societies than to the Committee. From this small beginning, the Committee went forward into an enterprise, of which it was unable to suspect the scope and growth. A few friends joined together under the President, Gustave Ador, to sort the mail. A year later, there were 1,200 workers at the International Prisoners of War Agency, which occupied the premises and basement of a museum, and soon spread into several neighbouring buildings.

This continuous expansion was made necessary by the increase in the number of countries drawn into the war. To the initial Belgian, British, French and German National Sections were added Bulgarian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Serbian,

Turkish and United States Sections. An Austro-Hungarian Section looked after Austrian and Hungarian members of the forces fighting on the Western front. An agreement between Italy and Austria ensured a direct exchange of information on PW, and made it unnecessary for there to be more than a skeleton Italian Section at Geneva. As regards the Eastern front, the Danish Red Cross had agreed, by request of the ICRC, to be responsible for such matters in this area, and an Agency was set up for the purpose in Copenhagen.

A Civilian Section dealt with cases relating to civilian internees in various countries, and ensured an exchange of news with the civil population of invaded territories.

Prisoner of war relief work remained outside the province of the Agency. A transport firm ensured free of charge the forwarding in transit of parcels coming through Geneva; the greater part of consignments for PW were in any case sent through the Netherlands.

The experience gained by the ICRC during the first World War led it to propose to the Powers that the 1906 Geneva Convention relative to the sick and wounded of the armed forces should be revised. The Committee further proposed the framing of a detailed Convention defining the status and position of PW in a far more comprehensive form than the Regulations annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907. In 1929, the plenipotentiaries of the States assembled at Geneva in diplomatic conference and signed the Geneva Convention in its revised form, as well as that called the "1929 Convention relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War" which, during the second World War, was to safeguard millions of men. Arts. 77 and 79 of the 1929 Convention provide for the setting up in a neutral country of a Central Agency of information regarding prisoners of war, the organization of which the ICRC may propose to the Powers concerned.

On the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the Committee therefore had a basis in law which had been lacking in 1914.

Gravely perturbed by the threat of war which hung over Europe, the ICRC, although pursuing its humanitarian work, for instance in Spain, prepared itself for the great task which

it would have to shoulder if war occurred. The trend in Europe led the Committee to think that war would, indeed, break out suddenly in countries adjoining Switzerland, and that it would rapidly spread. It might therefore become necessary for the Committee to set up, within a very short time, administrative machinery on a scale to match events of such magnitude, and the staff would have to be increased almost at once from a mere handful to several hundred workers, at a time when national defence would be a major problem and when most Swiss citizens would be mobilized in the army.

In May 1938, the ICRC set to work. On September 15, 1938, almost a year before hostilities began, it appointed from its members a special commission, called the "Commission for Work in Wartime" (Commission des Œuvres de Guerre), whose chief duty was to plan the organization and functions of the Central Agency.

The "Commission for Work in Wartime" held twenty-five meetings before war broke out. It consisted of six members, four of whom had played an active part in the management of the Agency in 1914, and who therefore had considerable experience of the many difficulties inherent in setting up an information agency.

The problems confronting the Central Agency were: (1) to find the necessary workers for the ICRC; (2) to have free premises allowing immediate opening of the Agency in case of war; (3) to draft the notifications informing the Governments concerned of its opening; and (4) to provide a rough outline of its organization and plan of work.

In order to recruit the requisite personnel in Switzerland, a provisional list was drawn up in 1939 of former workers in the Agency of 1914, who might be asked to co-operate.

By May, out of 50 people who were invited, 31 had agreed to join. Steps were then taken to engage people who had not worked in the 1914 Agency.

Negotiations were undertaken with the Genevese authorities in order to find available premises; on September 2, 1939, the ICRC was granted the use of the "Palais du Conseil Général", where Agency Headquarters were to be throughout the war and post-war period.

The plan of the future Agency was sketched out. Five Sections were provided for : Management, Registry, Office and Accommodation, Visitors' Reception, and Finance Sections. The heads of these various sections were appointed, and M. J. Chenevière, a member of the ICRC, was asked to take over the management of the new Agency.

The Commission for Work in Wartime drafted cables and letters notifying belligerent States of the opening in Geneva of the Central PW Agency, and circular letters for the other States signatory to the Geneva Convention, as well as to all National Red Cross Societies, to which the ICRC might appeal for help in its work.

From the outbreak of war, the Committee was thus in a position to offer the belligerent Powers the services of the Central Prisoners of War Agency. On September 14, it was officially opened, and the notifications despatched to the Governments and National Red Cross Societies of the countries at war.

Arrangements in the "Palais du Conseil Général" were improvised. The furniture consisted only of chairs and of planks laid on trestles. Letters, already in large numbers, piled up in cardboard boxes. Some fifty persons, most of them voluntary workers, began with their sorting and classification. Meanwhile, carpenters were putting up partitions in the main body of the building : a huge hall built for public meetings had to be divided into offices. It seemed as if the size of this hall, the gallery and annexes, covering 4,700 square metres, should be adequate for all the Agency's needs, since in 1914 an area of 1,100 square metres in the "Musée Rath" had been almost enough.

However, the spreading of the war expanded the activities of the ICRC to a degree it had been impossible to foresee. Thus, this great hall, which could accommodate over five hundred workers, nevertheless soon proved too small, not only to hold all the departments of the Committee, but even to cover the needs of the Central Agency alone. Though its headquarters were maintained in the "Palais", it was obliged to occupy successively the "Musée Rath", a bank and several flats in Geneva, representing in all a working area of some 11,000 square metres.

Whereas in 1914-18 the personnel did not exceed 1,200, mainly voluntary workers, by the spring of 1945 it had reached its peak number of 3,921 (1,741 voluntary workers), of whom the Central Agency employed 2,585 (1,676 voluntary workers). The last figure includes 1,400 persons working in about twenty Swiss towns, who gave invaluable help.

The magnitude of the work that lay ahead when the first communications and requests for information reached Geneva, can be gauged by comparing two figures: at the close of the 1914-18 war the International Agency's card-indexes contained seven million cards, whereas the Central Agency had 36 million at the end of June, 1947.

* * *

In the mind of the general public, the Central PW Agency is often identified with the International Committee.

That these two organizations should be thought of as one, and that the Agency is so widely known and appreciated, is easily explained by the fact that it was the first structure to be set up by the ICRC during the second World War, that its personnel was by far the largest in number, that other departments of the Committee, while still in the making¹, were also lodged in the "Palais du Conseil Général" until the spring of 1942, and finally by the countless personal contacts it made throughout the world with PW and their relatives. These circumstances explain the good repute in which the Agency has stood and still stands today.

It will be shown later in this Report how the liaison between the Agency and other departments¹ of the Committee was ensured.

For a true appreciation of the object and service of the Agency, one must keep in mind that the ICRC, in all its parts, was a single and homogeneous body.

¹ These various departments and their activities (PW, Internees and Civilians Division, Relief Division, Divisions for Administration, Delegations Abroad, etc.), are described at the beginning of Vol. I.

PART I

DUTIES, STRUCTURE AND GENERAL METHODS OF WORK

DUTIES OF THE CENTRAL PW AGENCY

The existence and activities of the Central PW Agency are based in law on Arts. 77 and 79 of the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929 relative to the treatment of PW, as follows :—

Art. 77. — At the commencement of hostilities, each of the belligerent Powers and the neutral Powers who have belligerents in their care, shall institute an official bureau to give information about the prisoners of war in their territory.

Each of the belligerent Powers shall inform its Information Bureau as soon as possible of all captures of prisoners effected by its armed forces, furnishing them with all particulars of identity at its disposal to enable the families concerned to be quickly notified, and stating the official addresses to which families may write to the prisoners.

The Information Bureau shall transmit all such information immediately to the Powers concerned, on the one hand through the intermediary of the protecting Powers, and on the other through the Central Agency contemplated in Article 79.

The Information Bureau, being charged with replying to all enquiries relative to prisoners of war, shall receive from the various services concerned all particulars respecting internments and transfers, releases on parole, repatriations, escapes, stays in hospitals, and deaths, together with all other particulars necessary for establishing and keeping up to date an individual record for each prisoner of war.

The Bureau shall note in this record, as far as possible, and subject to the provisions of Article 5, the regimental number, names and sur-

names, date and place of birth, rank and unit of the prisoner, the surname of the father and name of the mother, the address of the person to be notified in case of accident, wounds, dates and places of capture, of internment, of wounds, of death, together with all other important particulars.

Weekly lists containing all additional particulars capable of facilitating the identification of each prisoner shall be transmitted to the interested Powers.

The individual record of a prisoner of war shall be sent after the conclusion of peace to the Power in whose service he was.

The Information Bureau shall also be required to collect all personal effects, valuables, correspondence, pay-books, identity tokens, etc. which have been left by prisoners of war who have been repatriated or released on parole, or who have escaped or died, and to transmit them to the countries concerned.

Art. 79. — A Central Agency of information regarding prisoners of war shall be established in a neutral country. The International Red Cross Committee shall, if they consider it necessary, propose to the Powers concerned the organization of such an agency.

This agency shall be charged with the duty of collecting all information regarding prisoners which they may be able to obtain through official or private channels, and the agency shall transmit the information as rapidly as possible to the prisoners' own country or the Power in whose service they have been.

These provisions shall not be interpreted as restricting the humanitarian work of the International Red Cross Committee.

Thus Art. 79, in Sections 1 and 2, provides for the formation and duties of the Central Agency; Art. 77, in Section 3, lays down that belligerent Powers shall have recourse to it as an intermediary, concurrently with the Protecting Powers.

The 1929 Convention covers PW only, whilst the position of civilians, in 1939, was governed by no international convention. The ICRC succeeded in obtaining from the Governments that at least such civilians as might be in enemy territory at the outbreak of war, and who were to be interned, should benefit by the 1929 Convention relating to PW. The Agency was thus able to take action in behalf of one class of civilians, that is civilian internees¹, similar to that which it exercised in behalf of PW.

¹ To whom should be added the civilians who were in assigned residence or under police supervision.

The basic duties of the Agency may be defined as follows :—

(1) To centralize all information on PW and civilian internees (announcement of capture, deaths, transfers, etc.).

(2) To act as intermediary between the belligerent Powers for the transmission of this information.

(3) To serve as an information bureau and on the basis of the data assembled in its card-indexes or of researches made, to answer enquiries from public or private organizations and private persons.

This last function was the outcome of the first : the Agency kept a record on cards of all information it received, which enabled it to reply to queries about individual cases.

The definition given above of the duties of the Agency is not restrictive. The authors of the Convention, wishing to stress the spirit in which they had defined these duties, laid down explicitly that the provisions of the Convention should not be interpreted as restricting the humanitarian work of the ICRC.

The Agency was thus in a position, whenever asked, to act as intermediary between the belligerents for the forwarding of mail, messages, photographs, official and business documents, as well as the transmission of personal belongings which had been found on the battle-field, or on members of the forces killed in action or who had died in captivity.

The Agency was also concerned with civilians in occupied countries, who were deprived of any effective means of legal protection and were subject to the arbitrary decisions of the occupying Power and, in many cases, had to undergo the most severe measures of detention. The Agency made every endeavour to help them in the same way as PW, but was not able to achieve this to anything like the extent it wished.

Civilians who were at liberty were able to communicate with each other, even though separated by the war, by means of the Civilian Message Scheme set up by the ICRC in the autumn of 1939.

In short, wherever a zone of operations made direct liaison impossible, the Central Agency, so far as it was able, took steps to ensure communications. It should be pointed out that,

in general, the Agency looked after individual cases of combatants or civilians in enemy hands (or presumed to be so), whereas general questions relating to the status and treatment of these persons, as well as relief in kind for them, came within the competency of other departments of the ICRC.

Art. 77 of the Convention provides that the Protecting Powers shall act as intermediary for the forwarding of information on PW to the Powers concerned, concurrently with the transmission carried out by the Central Agency. In point of fact, the Protecting Powers (during the period in which they were acting), received from the belligerents copies of the lists of particulars sent to the Agency, and transmitted them to the opposing side, without, however, acting as an information centre. In the event of the belligerents not recognising a Protecting Power, it devolved on the Agency alone to forward lists.

Whilst remaining strictly within the framework of activities allotted to it, the Agency constantly had to plan undertakings and improvise new methods in order to carry out its tasks in the best conditions. The Central Agency is, indeed, a wartime institution : its management therefore has to bear in mind the fact that its work will be constantly hampered or delayed by the conditions of war.

In the sphere of relief, as in that of military operations, no achievements are final. Unforeseen circumstances may, at any moment, profoundly change the conditions in which the Agency works, and compel it to seek fresh solutions. It then becomes the task of the Agency, as it is of the ICRC, to anticipate events or adapt itself to them without delay. The Agency is appointed by the Convention to act as liaison with the official information bureaux set up in each country. The question arises as to what course it should take when the official bureau in any given country ceases to exist, or becomes unable to carry on its functions in a satisfactory way. In fact, the Agency then must make every endeavour to fill the gap, in order to prevent the terms of the Convention from becoming a dead letter. It is bound to transmit the information in its possession. When, however, normal means of communication are cut by war, the question arises whether this activity should be given up. This, of

course, is out of the question, so that new methods of despatch have to be devised, such as special couriers, express messages, use of the wireless, etc. The Agency also sets on foot collective enquiries (for instance, application to all men belonging to the same military unit), in an effort to trace the men missing after big engagements. Thus, each obstacle, far from leading the Agency to abandon a task, inspires it to find fresh means of achieving its aim.

STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRAL PW AGENCY

The extension of the war meant constant changes in the frame-work of the Agency, which was obliged by its purpose to adapt itself to events which could not be foreseen. There is no space in this Report to give a complete picture of its structure throughout during its constant evolution. It has, therefore, been necessary to confine comments in the Report to permanent features, and to describe its activity at the peak period, during the last years of the War. In these pages, the reader should not lose sight of the fact that the Agency was not static, but a living organism which could only survive by change, and at the price of constant vigilance, innovations and sometimes fruitless experiments.

The Central Agency, which was under the authority of the Agency Commission, was made up of Sections, each under its own director. At the head was a co-ordinating and supervisory body, the Management.

The various component sections of the Agency may be divided in three groups, according to their functions: General or Technical Sections, working for the Agency as a whole; National Sections, covering all persons of the same nationality; and Special Sections, who looked after certain classes of war victims, regardless of their nationality.

(1). THE AGENCY COMMISSION

This Commission consisted of three members of the ICRC who had taken an active part in the management of the 1914-18 International Agency, and of the members of the Management. One of the Committee members acted as chairman. The

Commission was the essential liaison between the Bureau of the ICRC and the Agency, and its task was to direct the work of the latter and to supervise its satisfactory operation.

The general lines on which the current work of the ICRC was proceeding were communicated to the Management at the meetings, which took place once or twice monthly. Important questions concerning the Agency were discussed by the Commission itself on the basis of reports tabled by members of the Management. When questions were outside the competence of the Commission, they were forwarded, with its considered opinion, to the Bureau of the ICRC.

(2). THE MANAGEMENT

The structure and powers of the Management greatly expanded between 1939 and 1945. At the beginning of the war, it consisted of one or two members, but from 1943 onwards, it gradually embraced a number of heads of sections. The duties of the members were defined, and one of them was appointed as chief.

The Management settled questions relating to working methods, the number of personnel, premises and supplies. Meetings were held several times a week for general discussion of important problems, and to enable members to exchange information in their respective fields of work: thus all were familiar with the essential features of current problems. If any questions lay outside its province, the Management passed it on to the Commission.

Besides these general tasks, the Management was responsible for others of a specific kind. One was of particular importance: the supervision of General Sections dealing with matters of a technical kind, for which there was no single responsible head, but which were however essential, for instance, PW lists, photostats, typing and preliminary classification. The Management signed the letters for these Sections.

The Management, which included a secretariat with manifold duties, was completed by an Advisory Group. This was concerned with the study and carrying out of plans, and always

included at least three members. During the war years, the group applied itself to careful study and research, in order to improve and standardize working methods ; it drafted technical notes advocating methods which had proved entirely satisfactory in certain Sections ¹. The use of standard forms especially was made general, and in the course of time proved indispensable for rapid and economic handling of numerous similar cases. The Advisory Group further issued these standards forms to the various Sections and to the Committee's Delegations abroad. Finally, and above all since the end of the war, members of this Group were entrusted by the Management with the organization of new tasks within or outside the work of the Sections. They set up, for instance, for the German Section, working units amongst German internees in Switzerland and German PW in France. They also organized, after the war, the despatch of German PW mail to their relatives, through the good offices of the ICRC.

The Statistics Section was attached direct to the Management. This Section had a staff of two or three persons, and drew up, on the basis of particulars supplied by the Sections, monthly schedules on the work of the ICRC.

As regards the Agency, statistics were prepared of the card-indexes, incoming and outgoing mail, enquiries, personnel and other branches.

The card-index statistics showed the number of cards and the number of cases in the indexes of the Agency. They also gave

¹ For the purpose of these notes the work of National Sections was sub-divided in twelve categories :

- (1) Sorting of correspondence.
- (2) Despatch and filing of correspondence.
- (3) Card-index (formation, instruction, checking, statistics).
- (4) Card-index (team leaders, filing).
- (5) Checking.
- (6) Transmission of messages.
- (7) Dealing with information, enquiries, tallies.
- (8) Initiation and follow-up of enquiries, communications to enquirers.
- (9) Deaths.
- (10) Regimental enquiries.
- (11) Telegrams.
- (12) Civilians.

the number of "tallies", that is to say when enquiry cards tallied with information cards.

The statistics for enquiries showed the number of enquiries opened, or completed, and the number of those which had provided new particulars.

Personnel statistics gave, in particular, the distribution by Sections of the total number of working days for the Agency staff.

These schedules proved extremely useful to the Management and heads of Sections. They gave them an exact idea of the progress the work was making, and supplied a useful means of comparison for determining the Agency's requirements in personnel.

Finally, these statistical summaries represent an indispensable source of information for the ICRC, since they give in figures a survey of the immense task carried out by the Committee.

Regular meetings to exchange information, usually held weekly, brought together alternately the representatives of all the Sections, and those dealing more especially with civilian problems. In the course of these meetings, which were open to representatives of other departments of the ICRC and occasionally to delegates abroad passing through Geneva, those present gave an account of the work of their Sections, and the Management supplied the necessary information. The meetings were often made more useful by detailed statements from heads of Sections, of the tasks of a particular Section, and by accounts of missions abroad, etc.

(3). GENERAL SECTIONS

The General Sections, whose activities were solely technical, were responsible to the Management direct. Their work will be examined in detail in the chapter on the Agency's methods of work in general.

(4). NATIONAL SECTIONS

The National Sections, concerned with PW, civilian internees and civilians who were nationals of one State, were the central core of the Agency. They were subdivided into Services, the number and nature of which corresponded to the requirements of each particular Section. They were based on the nationality of war victims, as defined by the frontiers in 1939, at the outbreak of war. This division of work by nationality had already been adopted in part by the International Agency of 1914-1918.

At the beginning of the Agency's work, cases concerning civilians, whether interned or not, were dealt with according to each nationality by different Sections. Later on, these Sections were merged with the corresponding "military" Sections and became, as far as the main Sections were concerned, merely part of the National Section. Each National Section thenceforth became a homogeneous service dealing with all cases relating to the same nationality, with the exception however of certain classes of persons that called for the setting up of Special Sections. The latter remained, however, in close touch with the National Sections, and transmitted to them reference cards concerning the nationals with whom they were dealing. Thus, National Sections had in their card-index, sometimes of course merely in the form of a reference, all information and all enquiries concerning persons of the same nationality.

Each National Section comprised : (a) a card-index containing in the alphabetical order of names, all data and all enquiries received by the Agency ; (b) a secretariat dealing with the correspondence, usually including a checking subsection, and (c) a service having charge of the forwarding of PW mail in transit.

The National Sections were set up as and when the various countries were drawn into the conflict. It even proved necessary to set up services for nationals of some neutral countries who were PW, internees or refugees in belligerent countries. Thus there was scarcely a country, however small, for which at some stage a national Section was not opened. For practical reasons, small Sections were often grouped together under one responsible head.

The criterion of nationality always provided the most reasonable solution of most of the many problems which arose when national Sections were set up. Such problems were a result of political and military upheavals, e.g. annexations, occupations of territory, cutting up of countries by fighting zones or demarcation lines, constitution of new States, or exile of governments. We may quote the cases of Poland, which was partitioned by the occupation of German and Soviet forces ; of France, where there was an occupied and an unoccupied zone, whilst a Free Government and free armed forces were formed outside the country ; of Yugoslavia, where two new States were created (Croatia and Serbia), and where the rest of the country was occupied by Germany and Italy, whilst an independent government was formed abroad ; of Italy, divided by the fighting zone in two parts under the authority of rival governments. Finally, it may be recalled that in many national fighting forces there were a number of nationals of countries occupied by the Axis.

It might appear logical to cover all war victims belonging to a single class in one Section, independently of their nationality. A certain number of particular Sections were set up on these lines during the first years of the Agency's existence. This system, as will now be explained, had however a number of disadvantages of a technical kind, and was later given up.

The working methods of these National Sections and the part they played will be explained in the following chapters of Part I. Part II will be devoted to the special characteristics and development of each.

(5). SPECIAL SECTIONS

In the Special Sections, the exceptional situation of persons within a category was used as the basis of classification, instead of nationality. There were five Special Sections : the *Medical Personnel*, covering individual members of the army medical services and persons of equivalent status ; the *Sundry Civilian Internees* (CID) ; *Immigration to Palestine* (IMPA), covering

special cases of Jewish persons ; the *Section for Internment in Switzerland*, and the *Section for Dispersed Families*.

The need for the Medical Personnel Section was obvious ; the Geneva Convention relating to the sick and wounded places the Army Medical Service in a separate class, for which specific problems arise.

The CID and the IMPA Sections were set up to deal with the difficulties encountered in applying the test of nationality in the classification of individual cases. CID and IMPA had to deal with persons whose nationality was not always clearly defined, or who had lost it as a result of annexation, or of racial or political persecution. The two last Sections (Internment and Dispersed Families) were set up because it seemed convenient to deal in one section with problems relating to persons having common status or circumstances.

The existence of the Special Sections parallel with National Sections had many disadvantages. There was the risk of the same case being dealt with in part by two Sections. It was therefore necessary to make out reference cards or complete copies for the National Sections, and this involved loss of time and congestion of the card-indexes. It proved extremely difficult when card-indexing, to file surnames belonging to different languages, and this obstacle could be overcome only by setting up several card-indexes within the same Section. It was also no easy task to secure a sufficient number of personnel who were familiar with all the languages employed.

These drawbacks increased as time went on, until it was decided to do away with the Special Sections and to give their work to the National Sections. One exception was, however, made for the IMPA Section, which continued its work as before.

Finally, there were two Sections of a different kind, but which may nevertheless be grouped with the Special Sections : the *Civilian Messages* and the *Personal Effects*. These Sections were not based on classes of persons, but on particular tasks.

The work of the five Sections mentioned above will be treated in detail in Part II, that of the Civilian Messages and Personal Effects in Part I, in the chapter relating to working methods.

* * *

NOMENCLATURE OF SECTIONS AT THE CENTRAL AGENCY

This classification includes those Sections that were permanent, but does not include those which were temporarily set up as a result of passing necessities.

General Sections.

Lists
Photostats
Typing
Preliminary Filing and Evening Work
Auxiliary Sections
Outside Work
Reception of Visitors
Watson Machines
Statistics

National Sections

Date of Opening

Polish	1939
French	—
British	—
German.	—
Spanish.	—
Portuguese	—
Central and South American . . .	—
Scandinavian	1940
Belgian	—
Luxemburg	—
Dutch	—
French Colonial	—
Italian	—

Greek.	—
Yugoslav	1941
Russian	—
Czechoslovak	—
American	—
Japanese	1942
Hungarian	1943
Rumanian.	—
Bulgarian	—
Finnish	—
Baltic States	—
Sundry ¹	—
Austrian	1945

Special Sections.

Medical Personnel
 Civilian Message
 Sundry Civilian Internees (CID)
 Immigration to Palestine (IMPA)
 Internment in Switzerland
 Dispersed Families
 Personal Effects

* * *

Co-operation between the Central Agency and the Bureau of the ICRC was achieved, as already mentioned, by the Agency Commission, which periodically brought together members of the ICRC and members of the Agency Management. This association became even closer from the fact that several members of the ICRC took an active part in certain Sections, or directed them (Medical Personnel, Internment). Moreover, the Agency staff had the opportunity of meeting the members

¹ Nationalities not covered by separate Sections : Iran, Switzerland, Turkey, Stateless holding Nansen passports, and so on.

or principal assistants of the ICRC during informal talks arranged periodically, on subjects which had a bearing on the Committee's activities.'

Co-operation with the Secretariat of the ICRC and later with the Division for Prisoners, Internees and Civilians (PIC), was also maintained with the greatest care. The Secretariat, and later on this Division dealt with the general problems concerning those classes, of which the Agency covered the individual cases. It was therefore necessary that the work of the two should be in complete harmony. To this end, a head of the Agency was present at the weekly meetings of the PIC Division, and a head of this Division was present at the Agency Commission's meetings. Finally, members of the PIC Division, whose work covered a specific geographical sector, remained in contact with the heads of the National Section covering the same sector.

Other departments of the ICRC also dealt with individual cases. Thus, the Finance Department forwarded monetary relief to private persons, and the Relief Department transmitted individual parcels and books. The National Sections of the Agency were of course informed of these activities, and from the outset a two-way flow of information took place between the National Sections and those Departments.

Moreover, the Delegations in various countries abroad devoted a great part of their time to individual cases, concerning which they were in close touch with the National Sections of the Agency. One of the members of the Management Agency took part regularly in the meetings of the Delegations Commission.

These forms of direct contact were further supplemented by a Section for internal information, the Liaison Service, which, in particular, went through the mail register and passed on to the Agency Sections copies of letters concerning them, but which they did not deal with themselves.

GENERAL METHODS OF WORK

In its main lines, the Central Agency of 1939 was based on methods which had proved their value in the International Agency of 1914-1918, but certain mechanical aids to efficiency had meanwhile developed, and these were put into use. Faithfulness to the original document was a principle from which there was no deviation. The lists of PW sent by the Detaining Powers remained the basic documents; they were dated and provided with reference numbers. Instead of typescript copies, as sent in 1914-18, the checking of which wasted much time, photostats were now established and forwarded to the official bureaux.

The lists and other documents received in Geneva were methodically scrutinized and every name was recorded on a card. The filling up of information cards was, however, materially altered. In 1914, and in the early months of the 1939 Agency, certain essential indications were purposely omitted from the card and the researcher therefore always had to refer to the original list. The card-index thus had only the value of a reference catalogue. From 1940 onwards, however, all essential indications were recorded on the card. Another important innovation was the direct insertion in the card-index of original documents, such as capture cards written by the PW themselves, or enquiry cards filled in by relatives. The card was therefore no longer merely a guide referring to the source of information, but itself contained first-hand information. In 1939, as in 1941, the meeting or juxtaposition in alphabetical order of information card and enquiry card enabled "tallies" to be made, and information on the person sought to be sent to the applicant.

The method of making enquiries was almost the same as that used twenty-five years before. In particular, the systematic questioning of PW as to members of the same units reported missing, which had produced striking results in 1914-18, was once more resumed. Owing to the use of statistical machines of the International Business Machines Corporation, it was possible to give these enquiries a far wider scope and to make them much more fruitful.

The constantly increasing difficulties of communication led to the use of express messages and telegrams. The Agency even had to resort to broadcasting, to ensure the transmission of information and news.

I. MAIL AND TELEGRAMS

(1). *Receipt and Sorting*

The *Mail Sorting Service* and the *Telegraph Service* were responsible for the receipt of incoming mail and telegrams, and distributed them to the various departments of the ICRC. These two Sections were therefore responsible to a great extent for the smooth working of the whole organization.

Since the greater part of the letters and telegrams received by the ICRC were intended for the Central Agency, the working methods of the Mail Sorting and Telegraph Services will be described in this chapter.

(A). *Mail.*

There were two successive phases of sorting : (a) according to external indications ; (b) according to contents.

(a) *Sorting according to External Indications.* — The aim of this summary selection was to extract from the bulk of the mail everything that could be handed immediately to the Sections concerned. This referred chiefly to mail in transit to be forwarded by the Committee : personal mail of PW, civilian messages, and documents which, like capture cards, could be distributed without further examination to the Sections intended.

(b) *Sorting according to Contents.* — All other mail was sorted according to contents. This more thorough sorting entailed the reading and numbering of letters. Mail items were divided into a dozen categories. Three of these were given a special scrutiny,

which was preferably in charge of one person, owing to the complexity and importance of these papers : (1) general communications from Governments and National Red Cross Societies ; (2) mail from delegates abroad, which was specially entered on index-cards ; and (3) so-called " composite " items, which consisted of several documents and annexes, often mixed up by the censorship, which made careful checking necessary.

Letters concerning several Sections were handed to the Copying (Transfers and Extracts) Service, who made the requisite abstracts or, if necessary, circulated the letters. In this case, the various Sections added a brief note to each document, showing how they had dealt with it.

In each Section of the Agency, one person was especially charged with examining the mail reaching the Section and distributing it to the services concerned. This work was often done by the heads of Sections, who could thus obtain a comprehensive idea of the work of their department.

(B). *Telegrams.*

The Telegraph Service dated and entered in the Registry all telegrams, and had additional copies made, if they concerned several Sections.

On reaching the responsible departments, telegrams were entered in a record showing the date of despatch and arrival, their origin and the number given by the sender, the Section's reference number, and sometimes a precis of contents, after which they were handed to the Sections concerned.

(2). *Despatch*

A. *Mail.*

Letters for despatch were handed by the various Sections to the *Mail Despatch Service*, which had them forwarded. An exception was made, however, in the case of ordinary mail for the Delegations abroad, which was handed to the Service for collective despatch to Delegations. A further exception

was made in the case of mail sent by special bag, which was handled by the Special Mail Service.

The Central Agency, in virtue of the Conventions in force, enjoyed postal franchise for all incoming and outgoing mail, except for that which concerned civilians at liberty (e.g. civilian messages). One of the important tasks of the Mail Despatch Service was to ensure contact of the ICRC with the Swiss Postal Administration and the World Postal Union, and to work out with them the most suitable mail routes.

The Committee's mail was forwarded, according to its urgency and the state of communications, by overland or air mail, by cable or by special bag, reserved for the Committee's correspondence. Permission in the last case was obtained from the postal administration in certain countries, to overcome difficulties of communication ¹.

(B). *Telegrams.*

The *Telegraph Service* had charge of the despatch and receipt of telegrams. It had three sub-sections: Arrival, Despatch and Accounts.

The ICRC did not have the benefit of franchise for telegrams, as it did for postal services, and was obliged to come to an agreement with the authorities and the telegraph service of the countries concerned on a method of settling the charges. These were borne, as a rule, by the organization or person most directly concerned in the transmission by cable of information or messages. The ICRC assumed the often very heavy charges for telegrams dealing with general questions, as it did for all those sent on its own initiative. Although in principle telegrams were not sent concerning individual cases, unless the person concerned could guarantee payment, the ICRC on many occasions paid the charges when the addressees for any reason were unable to do so.

All telegrams despatched bore, at the end of the message, the reference "Intercroixrouge", followed by a letter and the

¹ A similar form of bag was long in existence between Geneva and Cairo via Austria, the Balkans and Ankara.

individual reference number of the Section ; these served as a reference for the reply.

A few figures will give some idea of the extent of the mail and telegrams received and sent by the ICRC. As from September 1, 1939 to June 30, 1947, mail items received numbered 59,511,000 and these despatched 61,158,000. During the same period 347,982 telegrams were received and 219,169 despatched. Some of these cables ran to several thousand words.

II. TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION BUREAUX

The terms of the 1929 Convention charge the Central Agency with the transmission of information regarding prisoners as speedily as possible to the men's home country. To do this, it was necessary to standardize the registration and transmission of documents. At the 1939 Agency, the receipt, registration and transmission of information were carried out by the *Lists Section* or by the National Sections, as the case might be. As a rule, all documents providing the Agency with information were registered, given a reference number, and a photostat was made of them. The Agency kept the original and sent the photostat to the official Information Bureau of the Power concerned.

A short description follows of the classification and filing system in use¹. This was based on the source and the nature of the document and the chronological order of its receipt. Each page was given an assigning mark, comprising a reference and a number. The reference was an abridged indication of the kind of document (for example, EB meant Enquiry about a British prisoner). These assigning marks allowed the filing of documents in the Registry. They were also inscribed on the corresponding cards, which allowed easy and rapid reference to the original documents. This was done in case of doubt as to the proper reading of a card, as also for all cases of deaths.

Information received by the Agency was divided in two categories : official and unofficial.

¹ It may be observed that the so-called decimal system, often used in large-scale administrative systems, and which has certain advantages, might also have been used at the Agency for the filing of documents.

(1). *Transmission of Official Information*

“Official” information included the data supplied by the official Information Bureaux (as provided for by Art. 77 of the 1929 Convention) and by certain other government authorities. This information might be in any of the following forms : telegrams, ordinary or microfilm lists, identity cards, death certificates or ordinary letters. Of these official documents, the lists, identity cards and death certificates were received by the Lists Section, whereas telegrams and ordinary letters were dealt with by the National Sections.

(A). *Transmission by the Lists Section.*

In order to carry out the mandate conferred by the 1929 Convention, the Agency instructed a special Lists Section to forward the official lists which included the identity cards and death certificates.

Official lists, owing to their authenticity, were the chief basic documents on which the Agency worked. They consisted of rolls giving information of capture, deaths, transfers and repatriations. They were received in every kind of form, sometimes manuscript, sometimes typescript, as no specific form is laid down in the Convention. This diversity had many technical disadvantages. As a rule, they gave the following data :— Surname and first name of members of the forces, date of birth, nationality, army number, PW number, address of next of kin and state of health. These lists bore the heading of the official camp address. It should be mentioned here that most belligerents declined to give the geographical location of camp sites.

As mentioned above, the Lists Section dealt with all official papers, such as microfilm lists, identity cards and death certificates, in the same way as with ordinary lists.

In June 1944 the American Official Bureau sent the first microfilm lists to the Agency ; each reel contained about a hundred negatives, each carrying as a rule particulars of fifteen

men. These microfilms were printed and enlarged by the Photostat Service by means of an automatic enlarger.

It is an interesting fact that the Agency, during the last months of the war, had also begun to transmit information by means of 35 mm. microfilms to the British and American official Information Bureaux.

The identity cards, which were sent by various Detaining Powers, such as Great Britain and France, were individual cards usually filled in by the PW themselves and supplying greater detail than the lists. Of all types of documents received from official Bureaux, these proved the most suitable for transmitting information.

There were various categories of documents certifying the death of a PW, and the Agency received a great number of these ; they included :—

(1) Official copies of death certificates, equivalent to the original document. These were rarely sent to the Agency.

(2) Various documents drawn up by the official Information Bureaux of captor States ; they generally bore the signatures of officers, and often those of doctors or witnesses.

(3) Forms devised by the ICRC and bearing its heading. They were already used during the first World War, but more widely during the recent War. Some official Bureaux made use of them exclusively.

These various types of death certificate were sent to the Agency by official Information Bureaux, National Red Cross Societies and camp commandants.

On their receipt in the Lists Section, the documents were checked, given a reference and registered, and acknowledgment was made to the sender. Each page was provided with references corresponding to the various nationalities mentioned. Registration was carried out on cards, on which were inscribed the reference given to the document, its origin and date, date of receipt, indications regarding photostats made and transmitted.

The documents were then passed to the Photostat Service, and the copies made were sent to the Powers concerned. Two

copies of the covering list were sent with each despatch, one copy being returned as a receipt by the addressees. From 1939 to June 1947, the Lists Section registered 3,565,869 pages of lists and other documents.

The *Photostat Service*, which worked in close co-operation with the Lists Section, reproduced the original documents on sheets of paper of the same size, or slightly smaller. The Section used, on an average, during 1945, 4,000 square metres of paper a month. The apparatus used were two "Triplex" machines, one of which the ICRC had bought as a precaution before the war, and one "Kontophot" lent by the kindness of the Swiss authorities and later purchased by the ICRC. A helio-printer was also used for some time, but was later given up as it did not prove satisfactory. Between 1939 and June 1947, 3,719,814 photostats were carried out for the Agency, of which 2,503,221 were made in the Photostat Service, and 1,216,593 in private workshops.

In 1914-18, it had been a relatively simple matter to transmit information received from captor States to the official Bureaux of the countries of origin of PW. This information was sent chiefly by means of official lists and concerned a small number of countries; it was therefore possible to entrust the receipt and transmission to one central service, the Copy Section. During the second World War, the Agency adopted the same procedure, but the extension of the war gave rise to many difficulties. As mentioned above, the States concerned used several kinds of official documents (lists, microfilms, identity cards and death certificates). Moreover, a great part of the data was sent by telegrams and these, for technical reasons, could not be dealt with by the Lists Section. The heads of the Agency therefore considered from time to time the abolition of the Lists Section and the division of the work on official documents between the various National Sections. It was finally decided not to have recourse to this method, which would have entailed far-reaching reorganization.

During the war, the duties of the Lists Section were widened as shown below, to include the handling of "unofficial" docu-

ments which bore the names of persons belonging to various nationalities.

Replies to enquiries addressed by certain National Societies to official Bureaux also constituted official information ; they were, however, dealt with by the National Sections.

(B). *Telegraphic Transmission by National Sections.*

The general use of telegrams and radiograms for transmitting information on PW was one of the new features of the Agency of 1939.

Whereas the Lists Section forwarded photostats of official documents by post, some National Sections, in order to speed up the arrival in countries overseas of especially important information (announcements of capture or of deaths) telegraphed these data to the official Bureaux.

Official Bureaux of countries at a great distance, or cut off from Geneva by the breakdown of communications, also sent the Agency certain official data by wire. Photostats of these cables were sent to the official Bureau of the opposing side, or the contents were cabled to distant countries. In the first case, transmission was carried out by the Lists Section, and in the second by National Sections.

In most instances, arrangements had been made with the organizations of the countries of origin of PW, as to methods of forwarding information.

(2). *Transmission of Unofficial Information*

All information from sources other than official Bureaux was considered as " unofficial ". These sources were public bodies, National Red Cross Societies, delegates of the ICRC abroad, camp commandants, camp leaders, individual prisoners and private persons.

This information usually came by post, but also by wire and in very varied forms : capture cards, lists, notifications of death, unsolicited letters, replies to enquiries, statements by prisoners.

Amongst unofficial documents the notices of capture, called "capture cards", deserve particular mention. This was a document filled in by the PW himself during the first days after his arrival in a permanent camp and addressed to the Agency. This card should not be confused with the card giving notice of capture, which the prisoner, in conformity with Art. 36, Sec. 2 of the 1929 Convention, sent to his next of kin not later than a week after his arrival in camp. The ICRC was responsible for the idea of the "capture card" and for its being brought into general use by the belligerent countries. Although the Convention obliges the signatory Powers to transmit information on PW without delay, experience has shown that conditions due to the war, such as the destruction or limitation of means of transport, the congestion in official bureaux, the priority given to work of national importance, all considerably delayed the forwarding of lists. These circumstances led to the introduction of the "capture card".

At the outbreak of war, the Delegate in Berlin, in view of the slowness in forwarding notifications, suggested to the German authorities that each PW, at the time of sending a capture card to his next of kin, should also send a similar card to the Agency, bearing all requisite indications to identify him. These cards would be placed in the files at Geneva, and there meet and correspond with enquiries made by next of kin, enabling replies to be sent. The German authorities accepted this principle. On March 26, 1940, the first capture card, filled in by a British airman who was a prisoner in Germany, arrived in Geneva. During the summer of the same year, capture cards from French and Belgian prisoners poured in.

A certain space of time had to pass and various hindrances to be met before this system came into general use: questions of reciprocity, in particular, delayed its coming into operation in Great Britain and in Italy. However, the system spread to most of the detaining countries, even if the despatch of this card was not a matter of obligation like that of the card to next of kin. Although capture cards could in no way take the place of official lists or identity cards, they did prove extremely useful. Owing to the privileges given to the ICRC for mail,

as regards routing and censorship, they were forwarded more quickly than cards sent to relatives, especially when postal communications were uncertain. Moreover, as they were written or dictated by the man himself, they enabled the correct spelling of names with more certainty than did the lists. Finally, as PW often filled in capture cards when they were sent to a new camp or to hospital, the Agency was informed without delay of changes of address, and passed them on at once to those concerned, which did away with some part of the delays or errors affecting PW mail. For this reason the Agency, from 1940 onwards, communicated information provided by capture cards direct to French next of kin, and up to the end of the war it telegraphed new data received by means of these cards to the British and American official Bureaux.

These cards were usually issued by the Detaining Powers. Towards the end of the war, however, the ICRC found itself obliged to have them printed in Switzerland and to supply them to countries which could no longer produce them, owing to war conditions.

Amongst unofficial documents received by the Agency, mention should be made, after capture cards, of the lists sent by camp leaders in Germany. Many Sections found in these a main source of information. They were especially useful when official lists were late in arrival.

When an unofficial list concerned men of the same nationality, it was handed to the National Section concerned, who gave it a reference, transferred the information to cards, had a photostat made and sent this to the official Information Bureaux. On the other hand, when a list was "mixed", that is to say when it contained names of men of different nationalities, it was passed to the Lists Section. In this case, too, it was given a reference, and a number of photostats were made corresponding to the nationalities. Each copy was handed to the National Section concerned who dealt with and transmitted it.

As in the case of official documents, some unofficial data were also communicated by telegraph to ensure more speedy delivery.

III. APPLICATIONS AND ENQUIRIES

The Central Agency not only received information, but also a great many applications. Uncertainty of mind of those who are separated from their near relatives is as grievous to bear as physical suffering. The fact of writing to the Red Cross brings some degree of relief, as the applicant has at least the certainty of someone sharing in the search, and to get a reply means that intolerable suspense is brought to an end. Many were without news of the missing, not shown on the official lists, and had no means of knowing if they were prisoners, wounded, sick or dead. The Red Cross was their last resource, and the daily flow of letters to Geneva was proof of their confidence in its powers.

The particulars given by the official Bureaux of the countries concerned were often of a summary kind ; this led to many supplementary applications to be sent by relatives direct to the Central Agency.

In order to meet the situation, the Agency had to adopt a wide and accurate system which could be adjusted to all extensions of the conflict, but was easy to manipulate : this was the Card-Index. By the end of the War, the Index contained 36 million cards ; these represented the continual patient gleaning of all the data and applications which for six years had passed through the Agency. These details were placed on cards which, filed according to nationality and in alphabetical order, represented the indexes of the National Sections. Applications which corresponded to the substance of data already in the Index were answered immediately : if no information was available, and whenever possible, an enquiry was set on foot.

In order not to burden this report, the technical problems raised in forming and operating the National Card-Indexes have been dealt with in a separate chapter ¹.

The notes which follow show the nature of applications arriving at the Agency, and the various means adopted for replying to them with accuracy and speed.

(1). *Applications*

(A). *Receipt.*

Applications arrived at the Agency in three forms :

(a) By mail (letters, postcards, application forms).

(b) By wire. The number of telegraphic applications steadily increased, particularly from countries overseas with which the telegraph was the only practical means of communication.

(c) Verbal applications made in person.

Applications arrived at the Agency either direct from private persons or through various organizations, official Information Bureaux, National Red Cross Societies, Relief Societies, etc., often in the form of lists. Methods in this respect varied according to the country.

Applications from France, Italy and Switzerland usually came direct from next of kin. On principle, the Agency acknowledged receipt if an immediate reply was not possible. Notifications of deaths, however, were sent through the competent organizations of the country of origin of the deceased, which undertook the duty of informing the relatives ².

In the case of the British Commonwealth, Germany and the United States, it was customary for the National Red Cross

¹ See pp. 94 sqq.

² In special circumstances exceptions had to be made, for instance, in the case of France in 1940-1941, when communicating the result of "Regimental Enquiries" (See page 49). The official and private organizations of that country were so overburdened with work that the ICRC decided, with their approval, to send a preliminary notification of death to relatives, at the same time informing the Official Bureaux concerned.

Societies to assemble the applications addressed to the ICRC (in Germany the practice was due to formal instructions), and to give the replies to the relatives. In such cases, no acknowledgement of the applications, was made to the next of kin.

On the whole, the applications sent direct by relatives steadily decreased during the War, whereas those sent through official Information Bureaux or National Red Cross Societies gradually increased, at least until the end of hostilities. Individual applications from Italy, however, continued to arrive at the Agency until the end, owing no doubt to the administrative difficulties in that country during the last years of the war.

It should be stressed that the ICRC has always attached much importance to direct contact with relatives and other individuals making applications, as one of the best means of ensuring that the services it could offer should become known. This direct contact was also a means of securing greater accuracy and speed in the forwarding of data of the applicants. Moreover, the numerous particulars given by next of kin to the Committee with regard to living conditions and mail of PW allowed it usefully to take steps with the belligerent Powers, and have defects put right.

Quite a number of private organisations collected applications, which they were not in a position to deal with themselves and therefore forwarded to Geneva, thus adding to the work. The ICRC is not in fact bound to reply to all applications ; it judges that this obligation only holds good with regard to those received from official organizations or near relatives ; however, whenever it considered legitimate, it faithfully performed this additional duty.

It should be recorded that some unscrupulous persons offered to act as intermediaries between individual applicants and the Agency, against payment for their services. Considering that the information service of the Agency was entirely free of charge, these proceedings might have been prejudicial to the ICRC. It was not always easy to prevent such abuses, which could only be detected through the number and variety of the applications made.

Applications received at the Agency were very often inexplicit,

or lacked necessary detail. Correspondents were not always aware of the need or value of the various data of identification, such as nationality. This detail vital was frequently omitted, not only by individual applicants, but sometimes even by an official Bureau, whereas the nationality of the individual sought was the very starting-point of the Agency's search.

Another source of perplexity was the frequent confusion between surnames and first names. Some first names widely used are also in common use as surnames, and were difficult to distinguish, failing due explanation.

The use of the standard card by individual applicants, and of printed forms by public or private offices, prevented this confusion, in so far as the information given was clear and precise.

The essential data normally required for dealing with an application were as follows :—

Surname and first name ¹.

Nationality.

Date and place of birth.

Father's name (for Latin countries in particular).

Religion or racial origin (for civilians).

Rank (for service men) or profession (civilians).

Unit and Army Numbers (for service men). Last known address (civilians).

Date when missing, or date of last news received.

Address of next of kin.

Degree of relationship between applicant and person sought.

Date of application.

The Agency made a point, whenever possible, of acknowledging all applications which could not be answered immediately. Correspondents thus knew that their applications were being

¹ In Latin countries, especially in Italy, married women still use their maiden names, which are placed before their husbands' names, or even used alone. It was therefore necessary to indicate clearly which of the two names was in use and, for compound or hyphenated names, to know which was the principal name.

dealt with, until the Agency was in a position to give a definite reply, sometimes at a much later date. This practise, in spite of the general use of printed acknowledgment cards, (Form 232 for instance), which saved much time and labour, nevertheless caused an appreciable increase of work.

The question arises whether the Central Agency cannot in future dispense with such acknowledgments. In this case, the public in all countries should of course be duly advised, through the press and radio, as well as by a note on the printed application cards.

The third type of application, referred to above, was that made at first hand by persons, some living at long distances, who called at the Agency. For these cases, a special *Reception Service* was set up, where applicants were received by experienced women assistants who were familiar with the Agency's powers of action in this field. After hearing applicants' requests, these assistants went to the National Section concerned for information, which, if found, was handed to the applicant. If no information was forthcoming, the applicants were requested to fill in printed forms which were passed to the National Sections for further search. Any information received was then forwarded to the applicant, except when it involved the news of a death, in which case the notification was made through the national agency concerned.

(B). *Working methods.*

Each application received at the Agency was given a reference and serial number on delivery—thus DF signified “application concerning a French national”—EB signified “application concerning a British national, calling for an enquiry”. Applications were dealt with as follows :

(a) The applications were immediately checked, i.e. the cards concerning the subject of the application were looked up in the Card-Index. This was known as the *Preliminary Check* ; any information found there was at once sent to the applicant. If none was found, an acknowledgment was sent, stating that

any data received later by the Agency would be passed on. The application was then transferred to a standard white card, called an Application Card, bearing the same reference as the original application, unless the latter was made out on an enquiry card of the same size, in which case it was filed direct, no transfer being needed. It will be seen below that enquiries were set on foot in numerous cases.

The preliminary checking was carried out by the staff handling the applications, or by clerks in the checking services attached to most of the National Sections.

(b) Applications were filed in the Card-Index at once without the preliminary check. When sent on standard forms or cards of the same size as the index cards, they could be inserted forthwith. For letters, the contents had first to be transcribed to cards. A short acknowledgment was sent to applicants (Form 232) to confirm that application had duly arrived at the Agency. One of two courses could then be followed :

(i) The application card, when filed in the Index, met with cards giving information, thus producing so-called "tallies" and the information was communicated to the applicant ; or

(ii) The application card, when filed in the index, failed to meet with cards giving corresponding information. In this case, the card remained in the index until the receipt of particulars produced "tallies" and allowed the applicant to be informed.

The two methods of preliminary checking and of immediate filing in the index were tried and adopted according to circumstances and the needs of the Sections. Preliminary checking was made use of when applications were at first sight especially urgent, for extremely intricate cases, or when a pressing request for search was made. Applications by telegraph always led to preliminary checking. Small Sections, which did not receive a heavy mail, but where cases were often intricate, also practised

this method. Moreover, it proved very suitable in cases concerning civilians.

The immediate placing in the Index was particularly suited to large Sections, where great quantities of mail were received and many applications for the same persons. For applications *en masse* preliminary checking was not possible. Although the method of immediate filing in the Index gained much time, it was less strictly accurate than that of preliminary checking, as it involved the work and varying abilities of a greater number of staff, and consequently a greater liability to error.

The Agency replied to individual applicants by letter, or preferably by standard forms. Great caution was observed in giving information, and if all factors in identifying the individual did not correspond in detail, reservations were made, and applicants advised to approach their national Bureaux.

Sometimes the Agency had to refrain from giving relatives information which might have done them harm, for instance, in the case where the person sought had enlisted in certain armed forces, whereas his relatives were living in territory occupied by the enemy of these forces.

(2). *Enquiries.*

(A). *Nature and general purpose.*

Both in 1914 and in 1939, the institution of enquiries represented one of the principal activities of the Agency. The latter did not confine itself to awaiting the conjunction of applications and information in the Index. While this method was adequate in simple cases, it could not be applied for more intricate applications or those which were of extreme urgency. In such cases, instead of waiting for "tallies" in the Index before informing the applicants, the Agency went ahead in seeking data from other sources.

An enquiry was therefore opened, on the request of applicants (individuals, prisoners of war, private or public bodies) when the data available did not permit a reply, and whenever enquiry seemed justified.

In addition to these enquiries by request, the Agency also itself instituted collective or individual enquiries for missing army personnel, or to obtain supplementary information concerning PW.

The principal circumstances determining the opening of enquiries were as follows :

(1) Military personnel reported missing, or the total absence of news from PW or internees.

(2) Anxiety of relatives regarding the state of health of PW or internees, and frequent requests for them to be medically examined (these cases were handled by the Medical Section).

(3) Requests for details concerning the deaths of PW, (cause of death, last hours of the deceased, spiritual aid given, place of burial, personal effects).

(4) Requests by relatives for evidence from men in the same unit (circumstances attending disappearance, etc.).

(5) Frequent need to complete data in the records of national Sections by securing from official Bureaux or camps supplementary details, or corrections to data received (army numbers, etc.).

(6) Anxiety of PW who were without news from relatives, and who worried about questions of every kind.

(7) Anxiety of relatives on behalf of PW who, long after the end of the war, had still not returned home.

For all these long and laborious enquiries, the National Sections applied to the most varied sources. Any public or private organization, or individuals likely to give useful information, were questioned—official Bureaux, institutions, municipal authorities, National Red Cross Societies, delegates abroad of the ICRC, camp leaders and camp commandants, chaplains and doctors, PW in camp, repatriated or shipwrecked PW, refugees, and so forth.

These enquiries were often of a delicate or difficult nature, and those responsible had to exercise judgment and discrimination. They knew that the result of their steps depended upon their

initiative and perseverance in constant checking and questioning, in the sifting of data and comparing of evidence, and in drawing conclusions from slight details. They had to have a thorough knowledge of the languages used ; they had to be familiar with the general working methods of the Agency and of each National Section, and to be aware of the many characteristics of the countries with which they were dealing, not only as regards PW and their relatives, but also the public and private bodies. With these provisions, they were allowed a great degree of independence in their work, and the heightened interest they brought to it contributed to its efficiency. It remained understood that doubtful cases should always be submitted to the head of the Section for advice.

There was no fixed method for handling enquiries, as each National Section encountered problems which had to be solved according to circumstance. An outline may be given, however, of the general rules which were common to all Sections.

The particulars of the successive stages of an application, the subsequent enquiry and the details obtained were concisely, but fully entered on the application card (date of application, date of receipt, date of opening the enquiry, its nature, positive or negative results, date of reply, particulars of the applicant, and of the individual or bodies asked for information). It was thus possible to see at a glance, at any moment, how the enquiry was proceeding, without getting out the records. In addition to keeping application cards up to date, most of the Sections entered the positive replies on information cards : this was the rule when the reply gave the notification of a death.

In order to carry on enquiries more easily, and to take the necessary " follow-up " action, the national Sections set up small " follow-up " indexes, in which current enquiries were filed in chronological order.

Printed forms, which had considerably simplified the handling of applications, were also used for enquiries sent out, and led to more speedy and accurate results.

(B). *Various categories of enquiry: corresponding organization in Sections.*

Enquiries opened by the Agency were either individual, grouped or collective, according to the case.

"Individual" enquiries were made in clearly determined cases, arising from various causes.

"Grouped" enquiries concerned persons in similar circumstances, and were generally made as a result of collective or "group" applications. Thus, group enquiries were set on foot in the case of air crews shot down or missing, and in that of crews of vessels that had been sunk. These applications came from the country of origin of the missing men and were addressed to the official Bureaux of the captor States.

The name "collective" enquiry was given to a "group" enquiry when it was warranted by its extent and the great number of persons involved. This applied to the search for evidence, usually called "regimental" enquiry.

The enquiries were the responsibility of the correspondence services of the National Sections. No standard procedure could be laid down for the Agency as a whole. The problems which arose were so varied, and changed so frequently during the war that each National Section organized its own correspondence service independently. An outline follows of the general principles in use :

The allocation of correspondence and enquiries, and the organization of efficient services were made on three bases of classification : (1) the geographical factor, (2) the category of the individual or of the cases concerned, (3) the origin of the application.

(1) In the first instance, one service could deal with all correspondence which had the same geographical factor in common, e.g. one language, or one theatre of war. Thus, the French Section included services for North Africa and Indochina, and the British Section for Germany and the Far East. (The last-named dealt with all cases connected with the war in the Far East, whether military personnel or civilians).

(2) In the second instance, all cases of individuals who had a common status or came under one category, were grouped together, for instance, services for Civilians and Deaths, which were common to most of the Sections ; Prisoners, and Workers and Deportees in the French Section ; Seamen and Airmen in the British Section.

(3) In the third instance, one service handled all applications from the same source : this system was applied by the German Section in its early days, for applications sent in by the OKW (German High Command) and the German Red Cross.

One or several of the three bases of classification could be applied, according to circumstances or the requirements of the Section.

(C). Enquiries concerning deaths. Services for Deaths.

The Agency was at all times especially concerned with information about men who had fallen in action and had been buried by the enemy, or who had died in captivity. Enquiries on this subject formed a considerable part of the activities of the National Sections, and it was found necessary to set up a Service for Deaths in each.

The difficulty of the task of these Services will be realized, if one considers the deep importance attached by relatives to all the circumstances attending a death, especially the following points : certainty as to identity ; the cause of death ; attendant details, such as the last hours, spiritual aid given, funeral ceremony, military honours observed, photographs of the funeral ceremony and the grave, locality and care of the grave, personal belongings, etc.

The most difficult enquiries were those concerning men killed in action, or who had died in field hospitals. Information in regard to PW, on the other hand, was more easily secured ; in most cases, their names were already recorded in the National Sections, and deaths usually occurred in the presence of witnesses.

(D). *Enquiries "by evidence" or "Regimental Enquiries"*.

Another type of enquiry, adopted by the Agency of 1939 as a main feature, and which had already furnished good results in 1914-1918, was the "Regimental Enquiry". This consisted of the systematic questioning of PW to obtain information on missing men of the same unit.

The term Enquiries "by evidence" would perhaps be more fitting for this type of investigation: the name "Regimental Enquiries" was however adopted at the outset, whether the enquiry was based on the regimental unit or not.

This type of enquiry was introduced by the ICRC after the Battle of France. It will be realized how wide a field had to be covered if the events of May and June 1940 are recalled. Army Groups disorganized within a few weeks; nearly two million men taken prisoner; the civil population scattered by the flood of troops on the march; the interests of individuals reduced to negation by the exigencies of total warfare; and everywhere along the lines of improvised defence, the dead left lying where they fell.

The Central Agency was overwhelmed by a daily influx of letters of application and official lists; every effort was made to answer applicants from the information on hand and by the usual means available to the Agency. In the French Section, however, when every name had been filed and all "tallies" had been registered, there still remained 40,000 names for which no information was forthcoming.

Thus, a whole year after these events, there were still 40,000 men missing, from whom their next of kin had received no news and whose names did not appear on the official PW lists sent in by the German military authorities. The Agency adapted its means to the task facing it. Since no results had been got through routine methods, it was decided to attempt to trace the missing men by applying to the French PW who had been in the same units, for evidence at first hand.

Complete lists of the French personnel posted as missing had first to be drawn up. By means of the press and wireless, the

ICRC called upon all French families who were without news of missing men to notify the Central Agency. All information received was placed on index cards by the Watson Machines Section¹. The following details were noted: surname and usual Christian name, date of birth, rank and unit (regiment, company, platoon, etc.). When the cards had been sorted, lists were made of the missing in each unit. From the capture cards received from Germany, the French PW were listed according to units by means of the Watson Machines. Once these two series of lists were established, which included the names of 570,000 PW, a systematic questioning of prisoners could be set on foot, for information regarding missing members of the same unit. A circular letter was sent to each man, enclosing a list of all men missing in his unit, and a printed form for the reply.

More than a hundred thousand replies giving information reached the French Section. These were forwarded to the French Army authorities, and enabled them to clear up the circumstances in which more than 30,000 men had been missed. The number of men still missing of which there were no details, was thus reduced to about 10,000.

In a number of cases, by means of evidence giving precise details of the spot where a man fell, the French "regimental enquiries" enabled relatives to arrange for exhumations and reburials, and to settle questions of inheritance or matters of pension in abeyance. It should be recalled that according to French law, the dependants of a missing man are entitled to a pension, as soon as two witnesses are produced whose evidence as to his death is conclusive and in agreement.

Similar enquiries were also instituted by the Agency on behalf of missing British army personnel. As circumstances were different, instead of enquiries being voluntary, as was the practice for missing men of the French army, they were only made on individual application, or following on collective applications from official or private bodies, such as the War Office or the national Red Cross Societies of the British Commonwealth. This type of enquiry was made by printed forms sent to the

¹ See pp. 108 sqq.

camps, each form bearing the name of the supposed eye-witness, the names of the missing men and a space for the reply. When the names of the witnesses were known, the forms were addressed to them in person. When no names of witnesses were known, or those called upon could give no information, the enquiry was still carried on through the camp leaders, who circulated lists of the missing classified by their units. Some enquiries, although leading to no definite result, proved very useful, because the men named as witnesses and unable to give the evidence required, often volunteered the names of comrades who could supply information, and the enquiry was continued. This last method, termed "snowballing", gave promising results, and was also used for missing men of the French Army.

The same type of printed form was used for missing men of the Army, Air Force or Navy. When returned to the British Section, the statements were carefully examined to determine which could be considered "conclusive", and which were at least "promising". The first definition applied to statements by eye-witnesses which left no doubt as to a man's death; the second applied to statements which gave useful particulars, but which did not reveal any definite facts as to the death. Only these two classes of evidence were used as a basis of information sent to applicants.

Enquiries "by evidence" were also instituted by the German Section after the end of hostilities, to gather information on a number of missing German army personnel.

Mention should also be made of the enquiries "by evidence" which were made amongst the survivors of vessels lost at sea, about missing seamen of all nationalities, especially British, German and Greek. In order to ease the work in this type of enquiry, an index had been made in the Agency, containing over three thousand cards concerning vessels of all nationalities which had been sunk, wrecked, scuttled, damaged or interned. All particulars supplied by Governments or published in the press are filed in this index: particulars of ships, lists of crews and survivors, their landing places, and other details.

All information obtained by evidence was of course transferred to cards, filed in the indexes of the National Sections, and

forwarded to applicants according to the arrangements made with each country.

(E). *Enquiries concerning Civilians.*

From the preceding remarks it will be seen that the Central Agency assumed in behalf of civilian internees¹, and those of similar status (in assigned residence or under supervision), the same duties in all respects as those practised for PW—transmission of information to official bureaux, tracing and enquiries, forwarding of mail, messages, documents and personal belongings. The description in this report of the Agency's work in behalf of PW also applies for these civilians.

As regards other civilians, however, such as political detainees, enemy national at liberty, and civil populations in general, the Agency's activities were confined to opening enquiries and forwarding messages, as the belligerent Powers exchanged no information concerning them.

The following remarks therefore deal with the Central Agency's work in favour of these other civilians. It has seemed necessary to divide the report into two parts, one relating to political detainees and the other to enemy nationals at liberty and civil populations.

(1). *Political Detainees.* — This term covers (1) nationals deprived of liberty by their own State for political reasons, or following on racial persecution, and (2) inhabitants of occupied countries arrested by the occupant and imprisoned, taken as hostages, or deported to the territory of that Power and interned in concentration camps. All these civilians, lacking any protection under the Conventions, found themselves delivered up to arbitrary decisions by the Detaining Powers, and were often submitted to the most rigorous measures of coercion and deprived of all means of giving news of themselves. They were as a rule subject to the supervision of the police authorities.

¹ The term "civilian internees" refers to those nationals of an enemy country who were in belligerent territory at the opening of hostilities, who had been interned, and to whom the Detaining Power, acting on the proposal of the ICRC, had agreed to extend, by analogy, the application of the 1929 Prisoner of War Convention.

It can easily be realized that the Agency's work in behalf of these political detainees was more difficult and more delicate than for any other category of persons. The complete absence of any legal protection reduced the means of action in their behalf and any chance of success in its intervention almost to vanishing point. The relatives of these unfortunate people meanwhile, who were a prey to increasing distress and anxiety, sent constant appeals for information to Geneva. The obstacles encountered, far from discouraging the management of the Agency, only served to increase their concern and their endeavours to help these sorely tried victims of the war.

Enquiries concerning civilian detainees in countries occupied by Axis forces were usually sent to the German Red Cross. When the applicants could indicate the place of detention, enquiries were sent to camp commandants for preference. Most of the steps taken in this way unfortunately had only negative results.

In order to improve this situation, the attempt was made to get in touch with the detainees themselves. For this purpose, one or other of the cards or forms available at the Agency were used (in particular Form 6r and Card 542). As there was a space on these two forms for a reply, the addressee could return them to Geneva, if allowed to do so.

The Agency did not have recourse to this method, if there was any likelihood that the applicant had knowledge of the place of detention by clandestine means; the detainees or their relatives would otherwise have been exposed to police measures. In this type of case, the ability to read between the lines of the application was of major importance and required on the part of the Agency staff both care and judgment.

In some cases these enquiries allowed valuable information to be gained on changes of address, departures for an unknown destination, or deaths. Here too, the utmost caution was necessary in making use of the information received.

The field of action open to the Agency, more particularly with regard to civilians interned in their own country, or persecuted for racial reasons, was even more restricted, as the responsible authorities consistently refused to supply any

information about them. These cases were dealt with by the National Sections and by two special Sections, who made every endeavour to intercede, the one in behalf of stateless civilians, and the other for Jewish families in countries under Axis control ¹.

The only regular source of information concerning political detainees which was available to the Agency consisted of receipts returned to the ICRC for parcels sent to concentration camps. These receipts sometimes contained, in addition to the addressee's own name, those of fellow detainees who had seized upon this un hoped-for opportunity of giving news of their existence. Thus, between November 1943 and the end of hostilities, 105,300 names of detainees became known to the Agency.

(2). *Enemy Civilians not deprived of liberty, and civil populations of Belligerent Countries.* — The Agency dealt with countless enquiries relating (1) to enemy aliens in the country of a belligerent or in territory occupied by him, but who had been left at liberty, and (2) to civilians living in their own country, when these two classes were separated from their relatives by a zone of operations, or prevented from corresponding with them by obstacles due to the war. It was in behalf of these people that the Civilian Message scheme, described in detail below ², was introduced. Applications concerning civilians of this category were generally passed to the Civilian Message Section, who dealt with them by despatching a Message Form 61, whenever the nature of the application allowed the conditions of this system to apply ³.

Owing, however, to the vast movements of population in belligerent countries, either voluntary or enforced, the response to civilian messages was often a matter of chance. Yet it was owing to these very circumstances that relatives were most anxious to obtain news. Moreover, as numbers of civilians

¹ See p. 299 and 301.

² See p. 63.

³ It may be recalled that the text had to deal strictly with matters of family interest, and not to exceed 25 words.

were entirely cut off from their countries of origin and were without means of existence, it was often necessary to solicit the help of expert organizations on the spot in their behalf. Here too, the system was found inadequate to meet a number of applications. Such applications were then passed to the National Sections of the Agency, who endeavoured to give them a proper answer. To this end, they applied to the National Red Cross Societies and to the administrative authorities of countries where these civilians were living, to the Committee's Delegations abroad, or when the problem required the help of a welfare worker, to expert organizations such as the International Social Service. These institutions were approached especially in order to reunite families, to facilitate repatriation or emigration, to assist applicants to carry out formalities and to support their applications.

The class under review also covers "civilian workers", who enlisted voluntarily or were recruited by force in occupied countries to work in Germany, and PW converted into civilian workers. As a rule, these workers, with certain reservations, could correspond with their next of kin. The services of the Agency were, however, called upon when for one reason or another, contact was interrupted. It then acted as an intermediary in forwarding news, or opened enquiries at the request of relatives. Enquiries of this type were usually made from the German Red Cross, from local mayors, and from employers, and good results were obtained on the whole. When civilian workers of some countries were suddenly cut off from their relatives owing to military operations, the transmission of news took on a great expansion. French civilian workers cut off from their own country by the new zone of operations established by the Allied forces in 1944, were a case in point.

IV. FORWARDING OF MAIL, MESSAGES, DOCUMENTS AND SUNDRY ARTICLES

The Agency, as already described, acted as an intermediary between the belligerents, not only for the transmission of information on PW and civilian internees, but also for the forwarding of mail, messages, official and other documents, photographs of PW, of internees and of graves, and, finally, personal effects.

(1) *Mail (Letters and cards)*

Article 36 of the 1929 PW Convention, which governs the transmission of PW personal mail, provides for the exchange of mail by post and by the shortest route. The part of intermediary played by the ICRC was therefore not a matter of obligation. In practice, however, the Agency was always ready to act as intermediary when asked to do so.

The belligerent countries arranged amongst themselves, generally by the channel of the Protecting Powers, for the exchange of PW mail. In respect of Europe (Germany, occupied territories and Italy in particular), throughout the greater part of the war, the exchange took place through the Swiss postal services, in particular in Basle ; the major portion went straight through, by way of the Basle office, from the country of the sender to that of the addressee. Occasionally, however, private persons or postal administrations had reason to think that the Central Agency would be better placed for forwarding mail, as it might have more complete or more recent addresses and that its help would thus ensure more reliable delivery. Such

mail was handed to the Agency, either because the sender clearly specified on the envelope "care of the International Committee of the Red Cross", or because the postal administration in the country of despatch, or the Swiss Postal Services, themselves passed on whole bags of mail to the Agency. Bags of mail were sometimes sent by mistake to the Agency by transit post offices of neutral countries.

By the end of 1946, the Agency had thus received and forwarded nearly 20 million letters and cards. This figure, which in itself represents quite a considerable volume, was only a small proportion of the total mail handled for PW and civilian internees.

This exchange of personal mail, working both ways, went on continuously all through the war. At particular times, however, its scale increased very considerably. Thus, after the operations in Italian East African and Cyrenaica, all mail from Italians captured at that time was sent by the "special bag" between Cairo and Geneva, which was the only possible route. The Agency had also to deal with a considerable increase of mail when Italy was invaded by the Allies in 1943 and British PW in that country were removed to Germany. In these circumstances, mail from next of kin was held up and the Swiss Postal Services, through which it was sent, decided, in agreement with the British postal authorities, to hand it to the Agency in Geneva. The Agency then undertook to readdress the mail when notifications came through from Germany as to the new quarters of these men. Over 800,000 letters and cards were thus forwarded in 1943 and 1944.

Notifications of capture telegraphed by National Sections to the official Information Bureaux of the countries concerned frequently bore no indication of the detention camp. For this reason, many relatives, especially in the U.S.A., sent mail for these PW to the Agency, which meanwhile had been informed of their addresses by the German authorities, and was able therefore, to forward this mail to its destination. In this way, the first contact between next of kin and PW was often made over a month sooner.

The Agency also received a large amount of mail for members

of the forces who had been reported missing by the official Bureaux. The next of kin hoped that information received in Geneva meanwhile would make possible the forwarding of mail to these men, before they themselves had been informed of the addresses.

As far as possible, addresses on letters and cards to PW were checked by reference to data in the card-indexes. The National Sections which received an ever increasing volume of PW mail, such as the British, German and Italian Sections, set up separate sub-sections for the handling and despatch of letters. In other Sections this work was done by the card-index staff or by the checking clerks.

When, however, exceptionally large quantities of mail came in, e.g. in the Italian Section in 1943, it was a physical impossibility for the Agency to check all the mail. A limit had to be set and only trial scrutinies were made before forwarding letters.

Some National Sections made extensive use of PW private mail as a source of information. Letters sent by PW to their relatives were likely to provide reliable indications, particularly of the writers' whereabouts, and often enabled the Agency to supply valuable information to the official Bureaux. Information cards, supplementary to those already in the index, were set up on the basis of these data.

The Italian Section made most use of this source of information. Owing to the slow arrival at Geneva of capture cards and lists of Italian PW, the camp addresses on the letters written by these men to their relatives often provided the first information received by the Agency. Over a million information cards were made out by this Section from data contained in these letters, during the East African campaign in 1941. Several successive cards were often made out relating to the same man, as he himself was moved to new camps.

Obviously, this method could not be used without certain judgment, as it delayed transmission of PW mail. It was employed only when other information was recognizably and consistently lacking.

Finally, the transmission through the Agency of a part of PW and civilian internee mail provided valuable information

from the outset on the general efficiency of PW post. The National Sections carefully assembled all data on this subject, particularly on the time required for mail to get through, and handed them to the Advisory Group attached to the Agency Management, who were thus able to supply the necessary material upon which the Committee could act.

(2) *Messages*

Neither the recommendations of the ICRC, nor the endeavours of the countries involved, nor the considerable help given by the Agency, could always ensure the normal transmission of PW and civilian internee mail. Despite the co-operation of the postal administrations of neutral countries or of the Agency, this transmission depended primarily on the working of the postal service in belligerent countries.

So many obstacles hampered this traffic—destructions of means of transport, congestion of censor's offices—that new methods of transmission had to be brought into general use. There was, further, a large class of people the ICRC could not neglect, namely, the free civilians who wished to communicate with their relatives in an enemy country. These people had no hope of making the contact themselves, as original letters could not pass hostile frontiers. No convention and no agreement gave these people the right to get in touch with each other.

The types of Messages instituted to give PW and civilian internees a sure means of making contact with their relatives and getting news from them were the *Telegraphic Message* and the *Express Message*.

For free civilians in enemy countries, the Committee set up the system of *Civilian Messages*.

Before describing these types of messages, mention should be made of a last means of transmitting news from PW and internees to their relatives, which grew naturally out of the circumstances. The Committee's delegates were in the habit, when visiting camps, of collecting short messages from PW who were without news of their relatives and of sending them with

the delegation mail to the Central Agency, whence they were transmitted to the next of kin. In some countries and at certain periods, this service was became very extensive. This was particularly the case in British India in respect of Italian PW transferred there in 1940 and 1941. Despatch of capture cards and lists from British official Information Bureaux had suffered considerable delay. Thanks to the Committee's delegates, initial contact was made, and was kept up for many months. The delegates, when drawing up lists of PW—the first information transmitted to the Agency—were also given long lists of messages by the camp leaders, in particular from wounded and sick PW. These messages were sent to the Agency, which then forwarded them to the Italian Red Cross.

In other cases, the PW or internees who could not get into touch with their relatives because of the lack of postal communications, sent letters or messages of their own accord to the Agency. The latter sorted and listed them; they were then transmitted to the delegations or to the authorized offices in the country concerned, with the request that they be sent on to the relatives. This method was of particular service to the natives of the French colonies who were PW in Germany (North Africans, Malagasies, Annamites and others) ¹.

Finally, camp leaders often sent to the Agency, of their own accord, lists of PW who had been some time without news of their relatives. These lists were usually checked and any useful data were recorded on cards. The lists were then sent to the National Red Cross, or to some other responsible organization in the country of destination, who ensured contact with the families concerned. This was done in the case of German PW in Canada and the United States, and of PW from India in Germany.

¹ Some of these transmissions were made by wireless. Thus, messages for Indo-China were transmitted by the French broadcasting authorities in the form of 25-words messages, drawn up by the Agency's Colonial Section on the basis of prisoners' letters to their relatives. This system was of very great service.

(A). *Telegraphic Messages.*

These are the only messages mentioned in the 1929 Convention (Art. 38, Sec. 3), which provides that PW may, in cases of recognized urgency, be authorized to send telegrams on payment of the usual charges. In practice, this permission was granted very grudgingly by most belligerents. The Central Agency, however, transmitted several thousand telegrams containing messages from PW or internees to their families¹, and sent on the replies received. These telegrams were never sent direct by the PW themselves, but always through a National Red Cross, for German PW in the United States ; through the Committee's delegation for Italian PW in India, or through the camp leaders in the case of British and American PW in Germany. These message telegrams, just as the letters and cards of the PW mail, were often checked in the Agency card-index.

An extensive use of telegraphic messages was made towards the end of the war for the benefit of detainees in Japanese hands.

Correspondence between Allied PW and internees in Japanese hands and their relatives was, from the very beginning of the war, a very difficult question. Not only was this mail strictly controlled by the Japanese military authorities, but postal communications, which had always been faulty and slow, finally came near to breaking down altogether. The systematic use of the postal Express Messages, too, had been opposed by the Japanese authorities. In these conditions, great relief was felt when, in 1944, the Japanese Government proposed the exchange, through the intermediary of the ICRC, of telegraphic messages between PW and civilian internees in Japan and in territories under Japanese control, and their relatives, on the basis of one outward-and-return telegram per head and per year. The proposal was immediately accepted by the British, American and Netherlands Governments, and the system was put into practice at the beginning of 1945. The National Red

¹ Apart from cables sent under the Telegraphic Message Scheme for the Far East, of which mention will be made later.

Cross Societies of the countries concerned assumed responsibility for the cost.

On arrival at the Agency, the telegrams were first sent to the Registry Section for the costs to be recorded and then handed to the British Section for transmission, as the majority of PW in Japanese hands were British nationals. The forwarding was done by means of separate telegrams for each person concerned.

In practice, the scheme only worked satisfactorily for telegrams sent by relatives to PW. The Agency received 61,000 messages of this kind and sent them on to the Japanese official Bureau.

The arrangement, however, for telegrams from PW to next of kin, did not come up to expectation: the Agency received only 2,400 messages from Japan for transmission.

(B). *Express Messages.*

This type of message, initiated by the ICRC in the summer of 1942, was exclusively reserved for PW and civilian internees who had had no news from their relatives for over three months, and for families similarly placed. It was designed to meet the delays and failures of the PW mail, and about twenty countries, including Germany and Italy, agreed to its use.

The Express Message took the form of a sheet printed on air-mail paper, bearing the Committee's heading and comprising two detachable leaves, one bearing the message, and the other to be used for the reply. Each leaf bore in front the names and addresses of the senders. The number of words to be sent was not limited, but the whole text had to be contained in five lines, on the back.

The Express Message forms were issued to PW and internees by the camp leaders, and to relatives by the National Red Cross Societies. The sender wrote out the message and passed it on to the same intermediary. Messages were forwarded by the most rapid means, whenever possible by air, to the Central Agency, which sent them on also by the quickest route. In the countries which had agreed to the scheme the censor gave

them priority over ordinary mail. As for the PW mail, messages were exempt from postal charges, with the exception of air postage dues.

By June 30, 1947, the Agency had handled 1,355,000 Express Messages, in and out. The scheme was, on the whole, satisfactory, but it must be borne in mind that these messages were only intended as a palliative against delays in the PW mail, and were not meant to serve as a substitute for the ordinary post operating in normal conditions. They served to particularly good purpose between Europe and countries overseas, and were used to a great extent by German PW in America and their families in Germany. In other circumstances, however, the time gained by their use was negligible and, in such cases, the authorities concerned were very guarded in their view of the scheme, which proved costly for the senders when they had to pay air postage, as in the case of British PW in Germany and their relatives.

As they went through the hands of the Agency, the Express Messages were carefully examined by the National Sections, to prevent any abuse of the scheme. As in the case of ordinary PW mail, the messages were checked in the card-index whenever it seemed useful. This was particularly done when they came from a camp as yet unknown to the Agency, or from one which was believed not to have announced all the PW it held, or in cases where the addresses were incomplete. Information of interest was placed on cards and indexed. Each message received the ICRC stamp before dispatch, and was recorded, so that the printing costs and postage dues (airmail) might be recovered.

(C). Civilian Message Scheme for the transmission of messages between free civilians.

The outbreak of war at once interrupted postal communications between belligerent States. A great number of civilians who were thus cut off from their families applied to the ICRC in the hope that it could help them. The Agency then received a very large number of letters for free civilians in enemy count-

ries. No agreement could be cited to ensure their being forwarded. Previous experience in these matters enabled the ICRC, in the autumn of 1939, to set up a separate department—the Civilian Message Section—which had to summarize the letters received into 25-word messages, upon particular forms, called *Civilian Messages* or *Family Messages*.

During the first World War, the Committee had observed the deep anxiety of families who were without news of their relatives, and it gave much thought to finding means of contact between next of kin separated by war operations. Thus, in 1916, the first service was organized for transmitting civilian messages on behalf of the populations of certain occupied territories (Northern France, Balkans). In May 1918, the Committee established a message service, reserved however for civilian internees, between the United States and the Central Powers, on forms established by the American Red Cross, and from which, in fact, the present Civilian Message form derived.

The ICRC had also made a careful study of the question during the Spanish Civil War, and had arranged a system of 25-word messages for use by civilians separated by the fighting areas. These messages were assembled by the delegates and forwarded to Geneva; from there they were sent on to the addressees. Over five million messages were thus transmitted from one area to another.

The original Message Form which came into use in 1939, called "Form 61" according to its reference number, bore the heading of the ICRC. On one side were inscribed the names and addresses of the sender and receiver, and the text of the message; the reply was written on the back. Both messages and replies were limited to 25-words each, and only news of a private or family nature was allowed. The whole system was based upon the strict observance of these two particular restrictions, and the Civilian Message Section carefully checked the texts of all messages which passed through its hands.

During the first months of the war, this Section summarized as many as one thousand letters per day. The staff of four rapidly increased to 150. Letters arrived, however, in such large quantities that it was no longer possible to avoid increasing delays

in transcription. The Committee was consequently obliged to propose to Governments and National Red Cross Societies of belligerent States that the Civilian Message Scheme should be modified to allow senders to write their own messages on Form 61¹. The German and British Governments were the first to accept the suggestion, and gave over to their National Red Cross Societies the task of contriving the technical means for making the scheme work, with due regard to the censorship regulations. The first messages in this form arrived from Germany on December 26, 1939, and from Great Britain on February 15, 1940. Following their example, most of the other countries adopted the Committee's suggestion, and by the end of the war, over one hundred different bodies (National Red Cross Societies and other agencies) had issued printed forms similar to Form 61, bearing their headings, for distribution to private individuals². After being filled in by the senders, the forms were assembled by the National Red Cross Societies³ and dispatched to the Central Agency, which saw to the transmission to the various countries, without having to go through the labour of transcribing the texts.

Although correspondence by this means was strictly reserved for the exchange of news between civilians resident in enemy countries, an exception was made in favour of civilians living in neutral countries, when postal communications with the exterior were interrupted by the war.

The threefold object of the Civilian Message Section was as follows :

- (1) To transcribe requests for news from letters to Form 61 ;
- (2) To receive, check and despatch Forms 61 arriving from abroad ;

¹ An account of the negotiations will be found in Vol. I.

² See p. 72 showing the list of National Red Cross Societies which adopted the Civilian Message Scheme.

³ In no case were private individuals allowed to send civilian messages direct to the Central Agency. The messages had to be sent by way of National Red Cross Societies or through the delegates of the ICRC when, for any reason, the Societies were unable to carry out this service, for instance at Shanghai in respect of occupied China.

(3) To receive, check and despatch by telegram or by Form 61 telegraphic messages received at the Central Agency.

(1). *Transcription of letters.* — By the end of June 1947, 425,500 letters had been transcribed on Forms 61. This work, which at first was very heavy, gradually decreased as the use of Form 61 by correspondents themselves became more general.

On arrival at the Agency, letters for transcription were first sorted according to language. The contents of each letter were then summarized inot 25 words on Form 61 by persons with a sound knowledge of the language. A receipt on Form 232 was forwarded to each sender, and the message was then dispatched.

In this process, the same reference number was inscribed on the original letter, on the Form 61 and on the acknowledgment. The original letter was then filed and could be easily traced through the reference number.

(2). *Civilian messages received from abroad.* — After assembling the forms filled in by the senders, the National Red Cross Societies forwarded them to Geneva, together with a list in duplicate of the messages. One copy of the list was returned as a receipt, and the other kept at Geneva for making out a record, indicating the origin, date of departure and arrival of the batch, and the number of messages by country of destination. This was the only record kept by the Agency of Form 61 messages which passed through Geneva.

The enquiry and reply forms were separated and sorted according to language. Then the staff familiar with the particular language checked the text of each message, deleting all allusions to political, military, or economic matters, thus keeping the scheme strictly within its prescribed scope, i.e. messages limited to purely personal and family matters. The difficulties encountered by the staff will be realized from the fact that the messages were written in almost every language. Each message was then stamped with the Committee's stamp, to show that the text had been checked. The addresses were also checked and completed, when necessary.

After being sorted for each country, the messages were sent

to the National Red Cross Societies, each parcel being accompanied by a list in duplicate of the contents, one copy of which to be returned to Geneva as an acknowledgment. The Societies then distributed the messages to the addressees, indicating how the replies should be sent.

Civilian messages, unlike PW mail, were not exempt from postage dues, and the forwarding charges were the responsibility of the senders. The Civilian Message Section sent regular debit notes to the National Societies concerned, based on the number of messages forwarded at a fixed rate per message.

Among the civilian messages received by the Agency from Red Cross centres, some were sent by, or were intended for PW, civilian internees or deportees. These categories of persons were allowed by the ICRC to use the Civilian Message Scheme when they had no means of corresponding by PW mail. These forms were not handled by the Civilian Message Section, but by the National Sections who, when dealing with them, noted the requests expressed therein, made out cards and opened enquiries when necessary. As already mentioned¹, the National Sections also dealt with requests from free civilians which could not be handled by the Civilian Message Section.

It was considered most important that messages which for some reason could not be delivered should be sent back to Geneva. To avoid causing anxiety to the enquirers by sending back the message with the bare remark "Gone away", the ICRC requested all National Red Cross Societies to make individual enquiries when the addressees could not be found. By this means, it was sometimes possible to find the persons concerned, or at least to obtain information concerning them. If the addressee had died, the enquiry so made often led to information regarding the date and cause of death. Deaths of near relatives were reported to National Red Cross Societies by the Civilian Message Section on a special form (No. 1155).

(3). *Civilian Messages by Telegram.* — In order to meet the delays in postal communications, the Committee adopted a

¹ See p. 54.

scheme for exchanging civilian messages by telegram. In December 1941, a department was set up within the Civilian Message Section with that object ; its work increased as communications became more and more affected by the havoc of the war.

Messages sent by telegram were, as a general rule, forwarded by telegram to addresses overseas, in countries with which postal communications were impaired, or by special request. If, however, telegraphic communications with the country of destination were interrupted, or if this was sufficiently near Switzerland to render a telegram superfluous, the messages were forwarded by Form 61. Requests for transmission by telegram received by letter or by Form 61, were of course always met by the despatch of a telegram.

As the working of the Telegraphic Message Scheme followed the same lines as for Form 61, the organization of the two departments was similar ; no further explanations are therefore necessary under this heading. It may be observed, however, that the charges for telegrams forwarded were debited to the National Red Cross Societies from whom the requests were received.

In order to meet the military censorship requirements, telegraphic messages and replies were always sent in the official language of the country for which they were intended, whatever the language of the original text.

Up to June 1947, the Telegraphic Message Section forwarded over 134,600 messages.

Summary of the Development of the Civilian Message Section. — The work of the Civilian Message Section was in close relation to the events of war. From the outbreak of hostilities, the Section transcribed on Forms 61 a great number of letters addressed to Poles by anxious relatives. The Battle of France, in the spring of 1940, also brought about the first heavy influx of messages. It soon became necessary to sort the messages addressed to France according to the zone (free or occupied) for which they were intended, and then to send them on to Lyons and Vichy, or to Paris. A considerable part of the work

was done for the exchange of messages between French refugees in Great Britain and their relatives in France. A great many messages were also exchanged between the Belgian, Dutch and Norwegian refugees in Great Britain and their home countries. Mention should also be made of the organization, in the autumn of 1940, of an exchange of messages between Great Britain and the Channel Islands, through the German Red Cross ; a large part of the population had taken refuge in England at the time of the invasion, and these messages therefore increased very much in number.

The fighting in the Balkans (spring of 1941) and the entrance of the United States into war (December 1941), brought about a very large inflow of messages to Geneva. In the spring of 1942, most of the South American countries adopted the scheme. So did Japan ; in January 1943, the Agency began to receive from the Japanese Red Cross civilian message forms, written in Japanese.

The severance of contact between members of the same family was felt much more when a State was divided by the fighting line. Thus, in November 1942, the Allied landing cut off North Africa from metropolitan France with which, as regards family ties, it formed one single area.

The Allied landing led to a fixed fighting line, which persisted over a long period and could be compared to the French front in 1914-1918. Over a million and a half messages passed through Geneva until normal postal communications between France and North Africa were resumed. There was no similar situation in France itself in 1940, nor yet in 1944 when, on each occasion, the pace of the war was too rapid to allow time to organize the exchange of messages between areas separated by the front. The Committee did its best to cope with the situation but, before the scheme could begin to work, the purpose for it had disappeared, as the fighting area no longer existed. From June 1940 to November 1941, when France was divided by the demarcation line, the French Government itself was responsible for the transmission of messages from one zone to another. The work of the Civilian Message Section was, however, considerable seeing that the number of civilian messages despatched

in France and handled by Geneva up to June 30, 1947, exceeded four and a half million.

Whereas the rapid changes in the military situation had not left sufficient time to organise the exchange of messages in France, the situation was otherwise in Italy. Here the country was divided by the fighting line from July 1943 until the end of the war, a fact that explains the large number of civilian messages handled on behalf of Italy—some three million up to June 30, 1947.

In 1944, the Allied advance through France and Belgium suspended postal communications with Germany. The French and Belgian civilian workers in Germany, who had been able to correspond freely with their families, were now cut off by the fighting line. From the beginning of October 1944, the Agency received large quantities of letters which could not be sent through normal channels. The Committee therefore made fresh efforts to have the family message scheme extended to civilian workers. Its endeavours were successful, and over four million Forms 6r went through the Agency within the following months. The Agency was once more faced with a heavy task, due to the enormous number of messages received and also to the fact that most of the relatives had given addresses that were insufficient or incorrect, frequently lacking the postal district number. The addresses had to be completed or rectified at Geneva, and the letters sorted, by departments for France and by postal districts for Germany. The messages sometimes accumulated to such an extent that some of the National Sections put their own work aside to help the Civilian Message staff.

During the Allied advance in Germany, in 1945, the march of events was so rapid that there was no time to organize the exchange of messages between civilians living on either side of the fighting zone.

Such were the chief stages of the work of the Civilian Message Section during the recent war. Circumstances prevented it from handling the exchange of news between the German civilian population and their connections abroad, until regular postal services were re-established. Even when the war had

ended, postal communications were restored only by slow degrees: the work of the Civilian Message Section therefore continued at relatively high pressure, but slackened during the following months.

When the frontier between France and Spain was closed in 1946, an exchange of civilian messages between the two countries took place: about 14,000 messages went through the Central Agency.

It may be claimed that the Civilian Message Scheme represents one of the most interesting achievements of the Committee. The Civilian Message Section was one of the most important departments, if we consider the number of cases dealt with, and one of the most significant in the work of the Agency as a whole. By September 1943, some ten million civilian messages had been handled in Geneva: up to June 30, 1947, the total was roughly 24,000,000. During the last years of the war, the average number of arrivals exceeded 20,000 daily. The results obtained are all the more worthy of remark, since the principle of forwarding correspondence between free civilians of enemy countries always met with great opposition.

It is common knowledge that States at war are extremely afraid of any secret transmission, leakage or divulgence of information and that they inflict the heaviest penalties for such offences, branding them as "intelligence with the enemy". In a country at war, the powers of the censorship are unbounded: any deflection from the rule of silence is regarded as dangerous or criminal. In spite of these facts, the Committee succeeded in inducing the Governments concerned to accept the principle of correspondence between relatives and friends separated by the battle front, and it ensured the working of the scheme without any controversy throughout the course of the war. Over one hundred associations (National Red Cross Societies or branches of the Red Cross, etc.) took part in the exchange of news between families. The principle of such an exchange already has the sanction of national legislation in certain countries, pending its embodiment in an international Convention.

Number of Civilian Messages forwarded

First messages			Total as on 30-6-47
1939			
Dec.	26	German Red Cross	Berlin 2,632,189
1940			
Feb.	15	British Red Cross	London 2,676,220
—	16	South African Red Cross	Johannesburg 171,428
Apr.	19	Rhodesian Red Cross	Salisbury 12,390
May	11	New Zealand Red Cross	Wellington 19,842
—	13	Danish Red Cross	Copenhagen 263,760
—	18	American Red Cross	Washington 1,014,134
—	21	Lithuanian Red Cross	Vilna 279
—	24	Brazilian Red Cross	Rio de Janeiro 49,085
—	24	Rumanian Red Cross	Bucharest 103,870
June	6	Canadian Red Cross	Toronto 122,142
—	15	ICRC Delegation, Egypt	Cairo 238,026
—	15	Hungarian Red Cross	Budapest 195,608
—	15	Italian Red Cross	Rome 2,999,910
—	15	Latvian Red Cross	Riga 164
—	15	Portuguese Red Cross	Lisbon 6,179
July	1	Slovak Red Cross	Bratislava 53,453
—	6	Yugoslav Red Cross	Belgrade 22,983
—	6	Netherlands Red Cross, Curaçao	Willemstad 10,551
—	20	Argentine Red Cross	Buenos Aires 49,268
—	27	Chilian Red Cross	Santiago 12,940
—	27	Ecuadorian Red Cross	Quito 2,433
Aug.	10	French Red Cross, Middle East	Beyrouth 26,145
—	10	Netherlands Red Cross	The Hague 1,038,791
—	17	French Red Cross	Paris 4,547,431
—	17	Norwegian Red Cross	Oslo 216,696
—	24	Belgian Red Cross	Brussels 1,075,009
—	24	Spanish Red Cross	Madrid 32,632
Sept.	14	Polish Red Cross	Warsaw 20,878
Oct.	10	Esthonian Red Cross	Tallin 50
—	18	Uruguayan Red Cross	Montevideo 4,409
—	24	Belgian Red Cross, Belgian Congo	Leopoldville 109,396
—	29	Irish Red Cross	Dublin 9,657
—	29	Icelandic Red Cross	Reykjavik 6,844
Nov.	11	Australian Red Cross	Melbourne 110,319
—	12	British Red Cross, Sudan	Khartoum 1,703
—	12	Serv. Soc. Aide aux Emigrants	Paris 318,214
—	12	Siamese Red Cross	Bangkok 3,015

First messages			Total as on 30-6-47
Nov. 12	Cuban Red Cross	Havana	2,451
— 28	British Red Cross, Palestine	Jerusalem	363,777
— 28	Luxemburg Red Cross	Luxemburg	9,838
Dec. 10	German Red Cross, Channel Islands	Berlin	760,348
— 23	German Red Cross, General Gov.	Berlin	127,255
— 23	Greek Red Cross	Athens	203,412

1941

Jan. 9	Swedish Red Cross	Stockholm	7,474
— 12	Finnish Red Cross	Helsinki	15,489
— 21	Japanese Red Cross	Tokyo	42,750
Feb. 12	Albanian Red Cross	Tirana	16,724
— 28	Netherlands Red Cross, Guiana	Paramaribo	7,704
Apr. 9	Bulgarian Red Cross	Sofia	21,092
— 18	Burmese Red Cross	Rangoon	117
— 21	British Red Cross, Newfoundland	St. John	206
— 22	Mexican Red Cross	Mexico	10,085
— 24	Indian Red Cross	New Delhi	23,166
May 15	Croatian Red Cross	Zagreb	12,614
— 15	Netherlands Red Cross	Batavia	111,193
July 1	Serbian Red Cross	Belgrade	12,546
Sept. 3	British Red Cross, Trinidad	Port of Spain	834
— 4	French Red Cross, Indo-China	Saigon	6,080
— 14	French Red Cross, Morocco	Casablanca	563,682
Oct. 2	Netherlands Red Cross	London	165,861
— 15	Peruvian Red Cross	Lima	9,555
— 19	ICRC Delegation, Turkey	Ankara	12,202
Nov. 21	British Red Cross, Kenya	Nairobi	14,070
— 24	French Red Cross, Algeria	Algiers	926,667
Dec. 1	French Red Cross, Tunisia	Tunis	145,333

1942

Feb. 2	British Red Cross, Faroe Islands	London	11,378
— 8	British Red Cross, Ceylon	Colombo	1,720
— 26	British Red Cross, Bahamas	Nassau	108
March 5	British Red Cross, Uganda	Kampala	2,123
— 6	British Red Cross, Malay Straits	Singapore	292
— 12	British Red Cross, Mauritius	Curepipe	1,639
— 24	British Red Cross, Bermudas	Hamilton	397
Apr. 22	Italian Red Cross, It. W. Africa	Mogadiscio	338,324
June 8	British Red Cross, Jamaica	Kingston	301
— 17	German Red Cross, Eastern Area	Berlin	24,974
— 28	ICRC Delegation, China	Shanghai	103,947

	First messages			Total as on 30-6-47
July	7	French Red Cross, Fr. W. Africa	Dakar	160,104
Aug.	3	Columbian Red Cross	Bogota	8,691
—	7	Panamese Red Cross	Panama	1,211
—	10	Haitian Red Cross	Port-auPrince	1,136
—	10	San Salvador Red Cross	San Salvador	1,788
—	10	Venezuelan Red Cross	Caracas	7,449
—	10	Bolivian Red Cross	La Paz	3,999
—	11	Costa Rica Red Cross	San José	453
—	12	Red Lion and Sun, Iran	Teheran	6,871
—	13	French Red Cross, Fr. E. Africa	Brazzaville	5,494
—	14	Guatemalan Red Cross	Guatemala	1,885
—	14	Iraqi Red Crescent	Baghdad	1,426
—	24	Paraguayan Red Cross	Asuncion	2,141
—	28	Turkish Red Crescent	Ankara	1,830
Sept.	9	Portuguese Red Cross, Port. W. Africa	Lourenço-Marques	1,597
—	22	Dominican Red Cross	Santo Domingo	586
—	22	French Red Cross, Somaliland	Djibouti	3,239
—	30	Nicaraguan Red Cross	Nicaragua	190
Oct.	8	Honduras Red Cross	Tegucigalpa	980
Dec.	14	ICRC Delegation, China	Hong-Kong	1,233

1943

May	21	French Red Cross, Madagascar	Tananarive	9,999
—	31	British Red Cross, Gambia	Bathurst	3
June	30	French Red Cross, New Caledonia	Noumea	1,140
—	30	Chinese Red Cross	Chungking	6,205
—	30	British Red Cross, Gold Coast	Accra	817
July	21	Italian Red Cross, Lybia	Tripoli	52,537
Nov.	29	French Red Cross, Martinique	Fort-de-France	1,927
Dec.	9	British Red Cross, Sierra Leone	Freetown	123
—	22	French Red Cross, Corsica	Bastia	38,917
—	23	French Red Cross, Tahiti	Papeete	405

1944

Jan.	20	French Red Cross, Guadeloupe	Pointe-à-Pitre	1,065
—	20	French Red Cross, Guiana	Cayenne	732

1945

July	23	ICRC Delegation, Austria	Vienna	185,222
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Other organizations, also messages by cable, messages transcribed from letters, etc.

1,154,847

Total as on June 30, 1947

23,922,013

(3) *Transmission of official or legal documents*

The transmission of official or legal documents generally devolves upon the Protecting Powers. The Central Agency was, however, called upon to perform these duties when no Protecting Power was available. This was the position for German PW in North Africa in French hands, as the German Government had not recognized the Provisional French Government. Numerous public and private offices who were called upon to send official or legal documents to the opposite side often transmitted them through Geneva.

Documents of many descriptions were thus sent through the National Sections of the Agency ; they were for the most part powers of attorney and contracts of all kinds, including marriage contracts, paternity certificates, divorce papers, wills, bills of sale, bank statements and other business papers, as well as allotment forms ¹.

In general, the Agency kept no records of these transmissions except the duplicates of the accompanying lists. Important documents, however, were registered by the National Sections on index cards. Photostats were also made of documents such as wills, which could not be replaced in case of loss. Some Sections found it necessary to have photostats made of all the documents which passed through their hands, when the risk of loss appeared particularly high. The Italian Section took this precaution, from 1944 to the end of the war, for all documents intended for Northern Italy. The risk from air bombardments became so great towards the end of this period that it was decided to keep all originals in the Italian Section and to forward only the photostats.

A variety of agencies sent documents to the Agency, or received them from this source ; they included the official Information Bureaux and National Red Cross Societies, further, camp leaders and delegates of the ICRC. The documents usually

¹ An "allotment form" is a document by which a man on service gives authority for the payment to his family, or third persons, of all or part of his army pay.

reached Geneva in parcels, with accompanying lists of contents. When forwarding documents, some Sections—e.g. the French Section—attached explanatory notes as to their use, together with accompanying vouchers, of which the counterfoils, signed by the receivers and returned by the camp leader, served as receipts.

(4) *Transmission of photographs*

Large numbers of photographs of PW and internees, also photographs of funerals and graves, were sent to Geneva by camp leaders, National Red Cross Societies and delegates of the ICRC. These were forwarded to the official Information Bureaux, or the Red Cross Societies of the countries of origin, for transmission to next of kin. In the same manner, the Agency forwarded to camps large numbers of photographs received from relatives.

The exchange of photographs between PW and their relatives raised no particular difficulties, as it was, in fact, part of the PW mail. The question of exchanging photographs of funerals and graves, however, led to negotiations between the belligerent Powers, through the intermediary of the ICRC, this exchange being considered as a means to check the application of the Articles of the Convention relating to the burial of PW who died in captivity, and to the upkeep of the graves. While agreement was unanimous concerning photographs of graves, some objections were raised, on principle, by certain belligerents with regard to photographs of funerals.

Among the great number of photographs which passed through the Agency, mention should be made of the photographs of German PW in Great Britain, deceased since 1944, which were forwarded by the British Red Cross in neat individual folders. This example was at once followed by the German Red Cross, which had photographs taken of the graves of British PW and sent these on with the same care.

(5) *Transmission of personal effects*

The 1929 Geneva Convention relating to the wounded and sick provides that belligerents shall collect and transmit to

each other all articles of a personal nature found on the battlefield or on the dead, in particular one half of the identity disc. The PW Convention provides that the Information Bureaux of the belligerent Powers shall arrange similar exchanges with regard to personal effects, valuables, correspondence, pay-books, identity tokens etc., found on deceased PW. Most of the belligerents, taking the view that one of the particular duties of the Central Agency was to carry out these transmissions, of their own accord began sending to Geneva the objects found on battle-fields or in hospitals.

In order to ensure the receipt, custody and transmission of these effects, the Agency was obliged to set up a separate department—the Personal Effects Section. The work of this Section was particularly affecting as it called up the memory of the fallen. The large numbers of letters received at Geneva showed the great sentimental value attached to these objects, in many cases small, well-worn personal possessions, which when they arrive break the silence that falls after the bare notice that a man has died.

It should be mentioned here that the numerous cases handled by the Personal Effects Section covered, as far as can be ascertained, only part of the total quantity of objects found, and which the belligerents were called upon to exchange. A great part of the personal belongings collected was exchanged direct between the various countries, through the Protecting Power or following special agreements concluded between the occupying Powers and the countries of origin of the deceased. This was the case, from 1940 to 1944, between Germany and France, and for this reason very few of the objects received at Geneva had belonged to members of the French forces.

At other times, lack of transport and means of communication prevented a normal exchange of personal belongings. In the Far East, for instance, no exchange could be organized whilst the war still continued, and the matter was dealt with after the war by the Allied authorities.

It should also be borne in mind that in many cases no belongings were found on those killed in action, members of the air forces shot down, or bodies washed up on shore: they

might have been lost or destroyed during action, or stolen at the time.

The Personal Effects Section first formed part of the general services of the ICRC, until it was attached to the Central Agency in 1943. Closer contact with the National Sections was found necessary, since these were better placed for pursuing individual enquiries, in response to requests of next of kin for the return of personal belongings. It was also decided that the Personal Effects Section should only deal with the custody and transmission of personal possessions. This work involved the receiving, registration and dispatch of such property. All cases handled were recorded in a card-index, and reference cards were made out for all the National Sections concerned. The established rule was that the arrival of personal belongings did not warrant the Agency giving a notification of death. The business of the Agency was confined to sending on the effects, whilst leaving it to the official Bureaux to make their own deductions after receiving the articles.

As the personal effects of members of the Italian forces had, by reason of events, to be kept in Geneva from 1943, the Italian Section made use, when it had occasion, of the source of information provided by these objects and the papers attached to them. This information was especially valuable when the property was that of a man killed in action, of whom the Section had no other information, or only inadequate details. With these intentions the Section carefully examined many hundreds of collections of personal effects ; by that means it was able to complete or amplify the information supplied by the Allied authorities, and to establish numerous identifications ¹.

Most of the belongings received came from official Information Bureaux, either direct or through the channel of diplomatic representatives in Switzerland, or of delegations of the ICRC (personal effects of deceased Germans returned from the U.S.A.). Individual or collective dispatches were also made by other

¹ The family addresses found among personal belongings allowed, in particular, to make distinctions between parcels bearing the same name.

organizations (National Red Cross Societies, relief societies, etc.), and by private persons.

Whilst the war was still going on, transmission was made either through the official Bureaux direct, by the delegations of the ICRC in various countries, or through the consular offices in Geneva, to which the property was handed over by the Agency.

Among the principal transmissions carried out during the war was a consignment sent to London in 1944, containing three thousand collections, packed in thirty-nine cases weighing over three tons. The consignment was sent by rail to Marseilles and from there by one of the ships in the service of the ICRC to Lisbon, where it was handed over to the British consular authorities for the remainder of the journey.

After the end of the war, the Agency received large quantities of personal belongings, the property of deceased German servicemen, chiefly forwarded by the American official Bureau. Within a short time, over 60,000 collections had reached Geneva: they could not be forwarded, as the German official Bureau was no longer in existence. In 1946, it was therefore decided that the Agency staff should itself undertake the search among the objects for home addresses, so that the effects might be sent on to next of kin when circumstances permitted.

In order to carry out this considerable task, the staff of the Section had to be increased: a team of fifteen persons had to be put on to the work, which took several months to accomplish.

During the summer of 1947, all personal possessions for which the home address had been found were sent on to the German agency which had, meanwhile, been instructed by the Allied Control Council in Berlin to act as a centre for the collection of the effects of German service-men, and to see that they reached the next of kin.

To give an idea of the difficulties met by the Section in the course of this work, the following practical details may be of interest. The articles to be checked were usually personal property in daily use, such as wallets, purses, watches, penknives, combs, rings, religious tokens and masses of papers of all descriptions—military or civilian identity documents, letters,

photographs, etc. The principal means of identification was, of course, the study of military or civilian identity papers. In very many cases, however, these documents were missing and other evidence had to be sought. A single name and address in a note book or on the back of a photograph were sometimes sufficient ; the contents of letters sometimes showed the rank and army post office of the deceased, and the name and address of the sender.

The work was made very arduous on account of the bad condition of the articles examined. In many cases, papers had, for weeks or months, been exposed to all weathers, buried under debris or in the ground ; they were often torn, tattered, soiled with oil or dirt, sometimes half-burnt, bore traces of blood, or pus, were soaked with rain or bespattered with mud.

Documents which could not be deciphered were handed to a chemist, who made a special study of this work of deciphering " illegible " papers in a small laboratory at the Agency. Although his equipment was elementary—an ultra-violet lamp, a small supply of reagents, and a few sheets of green and yellow cellophane—he managed to make out nearly all the documents which first seemed illegible.

Papers soiled by earth or mud spots were first washed in alcohol. For spots of other descriptions, all the usual solvents were tried in turn ; blood spots were generally treated with peroxide of hydrogen.

To decipher illegible writing the documents were either placed in a tinted light to show up faded parts, or in an ultra-violet ray ; this brought out the text which had been damaged or discoloured by damp. According to the nature of the ink used, various reagents were used to show up the text. Finally, when all other methods had failed, the documents were submitted to heat tests.

Metal identity discs were usually in good condition and became legible after slight cleaning. The most damaged were placed in a solution of soda or potassium hydrate, which restored them completely within a few minutes.

German identity discs only bore regimental numbers and units, which were not sufficient for Geneva to establish names

and addresses of next of kin. When sorted, therefore, the Agency forwarded a list of identity disc numbers to the office where the record of the German personnel by regimental numbers and units was held.

The Personal Effects Section handled, up to June 30, 1947, some 90,500 collections, of which 76,000 were German, 7,300 British, 3,500 Italian and 500 French. Of that number, it had been possible to forward 89,400 collections.

V. THE USE OF BROADCASTING BY THE CENTRAL AGENCY

In 1943, the ICRC took up the question of the use of the wireless to meet the deficiencies in postal and telegraphic communications. It appeared obvious that the radio could be put to useful purpose in the transmission over long distances of lists, messages, communications to delegations of the ICRC in distant countries, and in sending out replies to applications from individuals.

The broadcasting of messages from PW and civilian internees to their relatives met with so many difficulties of a political and technical nature that it could not be organized in a systematic fashion during the War, one of the principal obstacles being the difficulty of obtaining replies to messages.

Nevertheless, the broadcasting of lists and messages received by the Central Agency, and of communications to the delegates of the ICRC abroad, which as a rule required no replies, began to operate from May 1945, by special broadcasts from the Broadcasting Section ¹.

Information received by the Central Agency was broadcast for the first time on May 2, 1945, the subject being a list of French PW in transit through Switzerland: this first "special" broadcast of the ICRC had been improvised in a few hours and was given on one of the wavelengths of the Swiss Station at

¹ Since it was started in March 1945, the Broadcasting Section has made regular broadcasts on Swiss medium and short wavelengths, giving general information relating to Red Cross work, either independently or in connection with programmes of the Geneva Radio Station; it also transmitted the special broadcasts here mentioned.

Sottens. Following on this experiment, the Swiss Federal authorities, as an exception, allocated a special short wavelength to the ICRC, and re-transmission was ensured from Prangins and Schwarzenburg Stations. The period of these broadcasts was extended by degrees to twelve hours a day, Saturdays and Sundays included; they were made according to the subject matter, in seventeen different languages, and according to a carefully arranged time-table.

The Swiss Federal broadcasting authorities and the "Radio-Genève" Company granted the ICRC the use of all the technical installations required (studio and equipment, telephone lines and transmitters), free of charge, the actual programmes being carried out by the ICRC.

The first transmissions were made under the signal "Radio Caritas", afterwards changed to "Intercroixrouge". The lists of names and the messages being sent out were read in turn by two speakers, a man and a woman, in the language of those whose names or messages were broadcast, at an average rate of 150 names an hour, or in a day of 12 hours' transmission, about 1,800 names.

These special broadcasts of the ICRC were picked up in the countries concerned (France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, etc.), either by private listeners, or by the National Red Cross Societies or their local branches. As the Swiss postal authorities had placed a telephone cable to the Austrian frontier at the disposal of the ICRC, the broadcasts for Austria could be relayed over the whole network in that country, comprising thirteen short-wave stations.

In addition to the broadcasting of information and messages for relatives in various countries, a weekly service was set up for the benefit of certain delegates of the ICRC, who could not be reached by post without long delays, for instance, in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Belgrade, Rome and Naples; by this means, it was possible to send information and instructions.

The broadcasting of information was not intended by the ICRC to take the place of communications to the official Information Bureaux as provided by the 1929 PW Convention. It was merely a rapid means of reaching next of kin, when official

Bureaux were difficult to notify, as in the Balkan States, or no longer existed, as in the case of Germany and Austria. The National Sections were still bound to send their communications to the official Bureaux in the prescribed way. Indeed, unless acknowledged in the form of a monitored text of the programme, it is not possible to verify that a broadcast has reached those concerned, and a faultless transmission cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, the limited output of a broadcasting service (150 names an hour, or 3,600 in a twenty-four hour day for one station), greatly reduced the scope of this means of communication. It was therefore necessary to make a selection of the documents received by the Agency. In each Section, one member of the staff was entrusted with the choice of the documents suitable for broadcasting.

These consisted usually of lists of names, above all of PW, mainly German and Italian, who were still held in the camps, and of "dispersed" civilians (adults or children) of many nationalities. At first, the names of PW and internees repatriated through Switzerland were also broadcast.

Lists which were clearly drawn up and classified in alphabetical order were broadcast in their original form and card-indexed afterwards. Other lists were first card-indexed and the names read out at the microphone from the cards placed in alphabetical order. The longest list, received in August 1945 from the delegation in Northern Italy, contained 132,000 names of German PW in the area of Rimini.

Mention should also be made of the lists of "dispersed" children, chiefly German and Austrian, received from the delegations of the ICRC at Bayreuth and Linz. The names and addresses were broadcast for the benefit of the parents, also "dispersed", who had been searching for them until then without success.

Besides the lists mentioned above, the Central Agency also broadcast the contents of a great number of capture cards.

Individual applications for search received in great number by the Central Agency were also broadcast; full particulars of the person for whom the search was being made were read out, together with the address of the applicant.

Family messages from French civilians and native workers in France were also broadcast to their families in Indo-China : the messages from the native workers were broadcast in Annamese.

From May 1, 1945, to June 30, 1947, the special broadcasts of the ICRC reached a total of 4868 hours, and included the reading of some 570,000 names.

VI. GENERAL AUXILIARY SECTIONS

The rapid growth of the work of the Central Agency made it necessary, from 1940 onwards, to relieve the pressure in some sections by handing over "spade work", such as making out cards and the preliminary sorting, to staff teams whose services were at the disposal of all Sections. In this manner a number of services were set up under the name of General Auxiliary Sections: they included the *Typing Section*, *Preliminary Sorting Section* together with the *Evening Section*, the *Auxiliary Sections* and *Outside Work*.

(1). *Typing Section*

This Section was set up in the early summer of 1940, when lists of information on French and Belgian PW started arriving at the Central Agency and the information had to be transcribed on to cards. From the beginning, the Section was formed of typists who made out the cards and a team of assistants who checked the cards with the original documents.

The Typing Section grew rapidly—by the end of 1940, there were 100 typists and 150 checkers, the latter voluntary workers. The work done by these volunteers corresponded to that of about 50 members of the permanent staff. The pressure of work during 1941 and 1942 was so great that it was found necessary to set up an auxiliary section in a neighbouring town with a dozen typists employed on the same work as the teams at Geneva.

The Typing Section was organized with the intention that it should be a pool where all the cards for the indexes of the

Central Agency could be made. However, information arrived in such masses that the Typing Section inevitably got into arrears in the delivery of the cards to the National Sections. In order to gain time, these Sections started making out their own cards, transcribing on to them the details in which they were particularly interested. They did this in the way best suited to their needs, and the result was lack of uniformity in the cards.

A great part of the staff of the Typing Section had, therefore, to be drafted to the National Sections. The Section still survived, however, in a modified form; only work of an urgent nature was assigned to it. The Section retained a permanent staff of 10 to 12 persons for "carding" documents requiring immediate attention and for copy work. It served also as a training centre for Agency typists, where beginners were sent before being drafted to the various Sections. Except for a few permanent members, the staff in this Section was constantly renewed, and the permanent staff was often called upon to help other Sections.

During the course of 1942, a Roneo Section was added to the Typing Section, for duplicating forms, reports, technical notes and other documents required in the Agency.

Up to June 30, 1947, the Typing Section, in addition to other work, had made out 5,557,476 cards.; since the summer of 1945, it has been almost entirely engaged on making out cards for the German Section.

(2). Preliminary Sorting Section and Evening Section

The work of the Preliminary Sorting Section was the putting of index and capture cards into alphabetical order for insertion in the card indexes. That had to be done necessarily when a batch of cards was especially large; it was the natural corollary to the making out of the cards.

The Section was started in 1940, early in the year, and by June its work had considerably increased, owing to the arrivals in great numbers of lists and capture cards of French and Belgian

PW. The work accomplished by this Section always corresponded with the fluctuations of the work being done by National Sections. From the summer of 1945, it was principally employed in sorting cards and capture-cards for the Axis Sections.

Cards were first sorted by nationality. The next stage was a sorting by the first letter of the names, again by the second, then by the third and then came a final sorting. Sorting by first, second and third letters was done in three separate stages and by different persons ; the work was almost mechanical and did not require any special skill. The final sorting, however, from the fourth letter, usually done by one particular person called for more care and accuracy, and especially experience.

At first the Preliminary Sorting Section did the work of alphabetising for all sections, leaving the National Sections to make any merging or phonetic adjustments they had decided to adopt, before placing the cards in the index. At a later date the Section was, however, obliged to follow certain filing rules adopted by various Sections, in particular the German, Hungarian, Rumanian and Yugoslav Sections, where frequent phonetic merging, adapted to the peculiarities of the language of these countries, modified the strict alphabetical order. The staff had therefore to be familiar with this variety of filing methods, and that was not always a simple matter. Other members of the staff had to learn the Russian alphabet in order to sort cards for Soviet personnel.

Before the Preliminary Sorting Section came to an end in 1946, it had handled nearly 32 million cards. Several years' experience had shown that the average time taken by a trained sorter to alphabetise a thousand cards is four hours. Except for a few permanent salaried employees, the staff in this section was always composed of voluntary workers.

In 1940, a section in line with the Preliminary Sorting Section was organized and known as the Evening Section. It was under the same direction and was served entirely by voluntary workers (for the most part employees, tradesmen and workmen) who gave a few hours of their spare time in the evening to the Red Cross. This Section handled all sorts of urgent work, in particular preliminary sorting for National Sections.

The average attendance was about 40 persons every evening. Until it was closed in April 1945, the Evening Section had, besides other work, made out 250,000 cards, sorted 5 million, and transcribed 200,000 messages and communications to next of kin.

(3). *Auxiliary Sections*

When the Central Agency opened in September 1939, unsolicited offers of help were received from many towns in Switzerland. When therefore, following military events in the summer of 1940, the Agency was faced with an average of 60,000 letters a day, the ICRC realized that Geneva unaided could not cope with the task and recalled these offers for possible use. That led to the organization of the Auxiliary Sections.

An appeal was made which met with an enthusiastic response. The idea of making a contribution to the work undertaken at Geneva could not fail to rouse the entire sympathy of the Swiss people who, during the recent war, felt very keenly that it was their duty to help the victims of the war. Thus, the Agency which, in 1914-1918, had carried on the whole of its activities in Geneva and Copenhagen, distributed work throughout the whole of Switzerland during the second World War.

From May to November 1940, the first sections were set up in Zurich, Lucerne, Vevey, Aarau, Neuchâtel, Berne, Basle, Nyon, Trélex (Nyon), Morges, St. Gall, Lausanne, Winterthur, Yverdon, Montreux, Fribourg, Chur, Troinex (Geneva), Zug, as well as on the premises and with the help of the staff of the Swiss Banking Corporation.

In 1941, the continued growth of the Central Agency, and of the Italian Section in particular, made further efforts necessary. New sections were therefore opened at Lugano, Locarno, Bellinzona, Poschiavo, St. Moritz, Rolle, Mont-sur-Rolle, Le Locle, Chernex (Montreux) and Bulle. Later, further sections were opened in 1942 at Mendrisio, and in 1944 at Sion, Sierre, Chippis and La Chaux-de-Fonds.

The time came when some of these sections, after several years of hard work, had to close down. In this connexion, it

should be mentioned that in Geneva, several business houses and associations had, from the outset, lent their services to the Central Agency.

These Auxiliary Sections, as will have been seen, varied in number during the war. There were 24 in 1945, which assembled on an average 1060 regular voluntary workers. Whilst the war went on, only Swiss nationals could be admitted to them.

Eight Sections, accounting for 669 members were in the German-speaking Cantons; 330 members worked in Zurich and the remainder in Aarau, Basle, Berne, Lucerne, St. Gall, St. Moritz and Winterthur.

Eleven Sections, with 301 members, were in the French-speaking Cantons, at Bulle, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Chippis, Fribourg, Lausanne, Montreux, Neuchâtel, Sierre, Sion, Vevey and Yverdon.

Five Sections with a total of 90 members were in the Italian-speaking cantons at Bellinzona, Locarno, Lugano, Mendrisio and Poschiavo.

From the opening of these Sections, a great many members pursued their work with remarkable regularity and perseverance; they gave many hours of their time every day to tasks which were sometimes very monotonous. The high output of the Auxiliary Sections is due to their steadfast efforts.

Besides these workers, evening teams were started in some of the more important outside Sections, made up of staff members from commercial firms and banks, teachers, and others. These helpers, the majority of whom were experienced office workers, met on the premises of the Section, or in offices lent by their employers, who also supplied typewriters.

This voluntary effort, kept up over several years by men and women who had already worked long hours in offices or workshops, is a proof of the renown of the work with which they wished to be associated.

In a great many cases, the running costs were met by the Sections themselves, assisted by town authorities, local societies and generous subscribers.

Although the main object of organizing Auxiliary Sections was to assist the Typing and Preliminary Sorting Sections, and

their most important work consisted in making out and sorting cards, the scope of their activities increased as their members became more experienced.

The following are some of the other types of work entrusted to their care :

Sorting letters and messages.

Transcribing letters to Civilian Message Forms.

Checking texts of Civilian Messages.

Making out labels for parcels.

Registration and transmission of documents.

Copying of various kinds.

Translations of various descriptions.

Regimental enquiries (enquiries to PW in camps for information about missing personnel).

Notification of deaths.

Précis of files concerning civilian internees and entry on cards.

From August 1940 to the end of June 1947, the Auxiliary Sections made out 19,997,000 cards, filed 1,235,000 and sent out over a million communications. The other items above-mentioned, which sometimes involved long and exacting work, totalled over ten millions.

A perfect knowledge of German and Italian, and a good working knowledge of many other languages, enabled certain Sections to be of assistance to a particular National Section. Translations in Dutch, Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Lithuanian, Finnish and Scandinavian languages, Turkish, Arab, Chinese and Japanese were a daily feature of their work. The Zurich Section was specially proficient in languages.

The various Auxiliary Sections enjoyed a certain independence in regard to their internal organization, but all general questions were dealt with by the Auxiliary Sections Office at the Central Agency. This office also acted as intermediary between the National Sections and Auxiliary Sections for the distribution of work, and its return to the Agency. Further, one person in

each National Section was in charge of work sent out to Auxiliary Sections.

The Auxiliary Sections Office received from the National Sections the work for the Auxiliary Sections, with a covering list of the documents which required attention, and for which they were responsible.

Any work which had had some unusual feature was accompanied by explicit instructions from the National Section concerned, and to each new case was attached a model to indicate the treatment required. Great stress must be laid on the extreme importance of instructions and models ; the latter were indeed indispensable for good output by the Auxiliary Sections.

When work was finished it was sent back to the Auxiliary Sections Office in Geneva and handed to the National Sections.

The Auxiliary Sections Office used the "Cardex" system to keep a careful check on all work sent out to Sections and on its return. Its index allowed it to be seen at a glance how work was progressing in each Section.

Each Section checked its own work. In general, the National Sections were not in direct contact with the Auxiliary Sections and had to send all comments or criticism regarding work returned to the Auxiliary Sections Office, which was thus able to judge the general quality of the work done by the various teams, and to plan the distribution of work accordingly.

In the course of time, the output of the Auxiliary Sections showed marked improvement ; a great many helpers became as experienced and methodical as professional staff. It should be observed that as the Agency, under pressure of events, grew in extent and scope, the work required of these teams became more varied, complex and urgent. Their members applied themselves with patience and assiduity to a task which continued to increase, and they accomplished it to the entire satisfaction of the head office.

(4). *Outside Work*

The Auxiliary Sections, by the autumn of 1945, had reached the peak of their working capacity, and no more staff was available at Geneva. The Central Agency was therefore obliged

to set up, in Switzerland and the neighbouring parts of France and in agreement with the authorities concerned, teams of helpers composed of military internees, civilian internees and German PW.

From September 20, 1945, eleven of these Branches were working in Switzerland, and one in France, as from March 14, 1946. These teams were intended primarily to help the German Section, the work of which had grown considerably with the end of the war. The main lines of their work were :

- Sorting mail from German PW to their next of kin ;
- Making out information and enquiry cards ;
- Preliminary filing of cards ;
- Transmission of messages to prisoners or internees ;
- Communicating information to families ;
- Translation of documents into various languages.

The work of these Branches was, as in the case of Auxiliary Sections, controlled by an administrative office of the Central Agency, called the Outside Work Office, which directed the distribution of work to the Branches and its return to the Agency. No messages or communications were sent direct from Branches to families.

From September 1945 to June 1947, the Branches worked 612,697 hours, corresponding to the average attendance of 174 regular workers at the Central Agency. During this same period, members of these sections produced 14,891,000 letters, messages or cards.

Also, from September 1945 to June 1946, over six million PW letters and cards were sorted according to occupation zones and postal districts.

Such high output could only be attained by intensive standardization of working methods, and careful checking by the Branches themselves greatly contributed to the quality of the work they accomplished.

VII. CARD-INDEXES

(1). *General Remarks*

In order to perform adequately the duties of a bureau to supply information, it was necessary for the Central Agency to have a record of the names of all PW and civilian internees, about whom information had been received or applications made. For this purpose, all applications were transcribed to filing cards of uniform size which were filed in alphabetical order and formed the card-index. The coming together of information and application cards within the index—so-called “tallies”—made it possible to supply the applicants with the information required.

It was decided, for reasons primarily of language, to make separate indexes for each National Section. This system allowed the principle of alphabetical filing to be adapted to the various languages, and even to the various alphabets, which would have been far more difficult with a joint index.

Although the principle of alphabetical filing has not varied in the course of years, the methods, features and use of filing cards have changed to some degree.

In the International Agency of 1914 to 1918, and at the beginning of the 1939 Central Agency, card-indexes were used simply as a name index or reference. Cards bore only the prisoners' names, the data for identification and the reference number of the original documents. Thus, when communicating information to applicants, these documents had to be consulted in every instance. Experienced staff, working with all due

caution, examined each case before transferring information concerning the case in point to the enquiry cards.

This system, which in some respects may appear more strictly accurate, could only be usefully applied when the number of cases to be examined was comparatively small. When mail arrived in great quantities, however, systematic reference to the documents required too much time and space. It was, therefore, found necessary, in face of the sudden influx of enquiries in 1940, to change the method of using the index card. Instead of serving simply as a means of reference, it became a record of information: it bore not only the name of the man concerned, the essential data for identification, and the reference to the original document, but also the information properly so-called (notification of capture, death, etc.), contained in the said document. From that time, the card-index ceased to be an alphabetical reference and became to some extent a duplicate of the records of any given Section, thus avoiding the need to consult original documents on each occasion. Every possible care was taken for the literal transcription of the original, when making out the information cards. No doubt, the necessity of carefully copying all the data entailed considerable work, but this method allowed the task to be split up and dealt with by several teams at the same time.

A further important innovation in the use of the card-index was the filing in the latter of original documents which, just as the capture-cards and standard application forms, were filled in by the senders on forms of the same size as the index-cards.

By these devices, the card-index became the essential working instrument of the National Sections, and a general record of information on all cases dealt with.

(2). *Equipment*

(A). *Cards.*

The index-card was the exact copy of the original document, and the Agency kept strictly to this rule. Since the work was based on the cards and not on the original documents, it was

necessary that the first should be a true picture of the second. Even when names appeared to be mutilated, they were copied as written, any such errors being usually put right by the rules which were applied when the cards were filed.

As already mentioned¹, the cards were made out by the Typing and Auxiliary Sections. In urgent cases, or in those which required experience, the National Sections often typed their own cards.

In order to make the research and other work easier, it was soon found necessary to adopt a standard size for all cards. The practice was not, however, made general for the whole Agency, and each Section was left free to employ whatever system seemed best for its special needs.

The Agency of 1914, and that of 1939 at the outset employed cards measuring 8 by 12½ cm. (3 by 5 in.); these were filed upright.

In 1940, on receiving the first capture-cards from Germany which measured 10 by 15 cm. (4 by 6 in.), it was decided to replace all the cards in the Agency by cards of this size, in order to file the capture-cards straight away in the index. Cards were now filed lengthwise². The same size was afterwards adopted for all standard application cards, which could thus also be filed immediately in the index.

Two wholly different systems may be used for filing information received at various times and concerning the same person. The first method consists of making out a fresh card on each occasion, thus forming a batch of cards for each person. The other is to record successive data on a single card, which may be described as a "composite" or "key" card.

The Central Agency adopted the first method, as the only means of keeping its index comparatively up to date. In this way, the typing of the cards could be handed over to the many Auxiliary Sections which worked for the Agency in various towns in Switzerland. Moreover, the information received by

¹ See pp. 86 sqq.

² With the exception of the American Section, which used the Watson Cards. See p. 265.

the Agency was frequently mutilated or incomplete, which made filing difficult. The use of batches, whilst leaving the information received in its original form, enabled the filing staff to detect errors more easily than the use of "key cards".

It is a fact that "key cards" take up less space than batches, and considerable time is saved in checking. For this reason, certain National Sections¹ gave the system a trial when it became imperative to reduce the staff.

Preliminary checking is required to make out "key cards" and keep them up to date. Before the card is typed, a check must first be made to establish if a duplicate card already exists, in which case this must be taken out of the index to be completed. A loss of time occurred in both cases, especially when original lists were not established in alphabetical order and cards then had to be typed before checking. As the trials did not prove satisfactory, the idea of adopting this system for the Agency card-indexes was abandoned.

The information cards varied in colour according to the Sections; enquiry cards for the whole Agency were always white; the liaison cards were grey.

The liaison cards were the exact copies of information or enquiry cards and were made out whenever any doubt existed as to a person's nationality, or when a man had served in other units than those of the regular forces of his country. The Section dealing with the case kept the original card, a liaison card being sent to all other Sections concerned.

Some Sections applied a key card system by abolishing duplicates. In this method, when two or more cards giving similar information for a particular person were found in the index, a transfer of the references was made to one single card, and the others destroyed.

Other Sections partly adopted a key card system by placing the essential data on one card, and less important details on separate cards.

¹ Amongst others the British and Italian Sections.

(B). *Accessories.*

The cards were filed in open cardboard filing boxes which were 16 cm. wide, 8 cm. high and 37 cm. long ($6\frac{1}{2}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 25 in.), bearing interchangeable labels, affixed in front and indicating the alphabetical division.

The boxes were placed on standard shelving. Four types of shelving were in use for the Agency card-index; that in most common use was 155 cm. wide, 105 cm. high and 32 cm. in depth (62 by 42 by 13 in.). The shelving was placed on tables wide enough to work on, or set on the ground in double tiers, which economised a great deal of space ¹.

For card-index work various accessories were used (clips or elastic bands, hinge-clips, marker-cards).

The clips or elastic bands were used to hold the batches of cards concerning the same person. Although their use made the work much easier, they added much to the total bulk of the index, and had to be given up when it became necessary to gain space by all means. This was the case for the boxes put aside, e.g. the French index for the Battle of France in 1940, and for those which were no longer in actual use after the war had ended.

The hinge-clips were used for holding the cards in place in the boxes; experience showed that boxes should only be two-thirds, or at most three-quarters full, to work with ease.

The marker-cards (also called flags) which bore tabs with inscriptions to help alphabetical filing, were inserted into the boxes to make research easier. The contents of the boxes were thus divided in groups of 100 to 200 cards.

(3) *Working Methods*

The card-index, which was the real centre of each National Section, formed a self-contained unit. The output and efficiency of the Sections depended to a great degree upon its due working.

¹ In the latter case, the lower part was not so high and included a sliding shelf, to serve as table.

(A). *Staff.*

The personnel of each card-index included :

(a) The *senior assistants*, who distributed and supervised the work, trained new personnel and did statistical work.

(b) The *filing clerks*, each in charge of an alphabetic sector and responsible for boxes being in good order and kept up to date. Each filing clerk was given an approximately equal number of individual cases to handle, and consequently of boxes. The number of boxes was reduced, however, when the work was particularly difficult, for instance, in sectors comprising very common surnames, such as Smith, Martin, Muller, and so forth.

(c) The *controllers*, who were usually chosen among the experienced filing clerks. A sector was allotted to each, and this was of course more extensive than for the filing clerk. Their duty was to go through each box, to see that the rules of filing were properly observed, and cases duly dealt with. In large indexes the controllers performed no other duties: for small indexes, they also helped with the filing.

(d) The *checkers* (in all sections where the checking staff belonged to the card-index).

(B). *Filing and Research Work.*

(a) *Distribution of work.* — When a number of cards had been assembled, the placing in alphabetical order was effected by a separate service, the Preliminary Sorting Section¹.

A distinction was made between cards giving fresh information, taken from original documents and being filed for the first time (known as “*moisson*” or “*harvest*”), and those which were sent back to the card-index after having been taken out for reference by the Sections (known as “*return cards*”).

¹ See p. 87.

The National Sections usually gave filing priority to certain batches of "harvest" which had to be dealt with urgently—e.g. capture-cards, which were of course handled before notices of transfer, or other data concerning PW who were already indexed.

When the cards had been placed in alphabetical order by the Preliminary Sorting Section, they were handed to the national card-indexes, where a filing clerk divided them into lots corresponding to the alphabetical sectors.

In large Sections, the allocation of work to the filing staff had to be centralized. The cards were placed in boxes bearing the names of the personnel concerned, who collected the cards every morning and brought back in the evening the surplus which had not been dealt with. This method allowed the senior assistants to see at a glance how the work was progressing and to take any action required.

It was ascertained that the ordinary filing clerk could on an average file 300 cards per day. This figure was generally less for the more difficult alphabetic sectors.

As regards controlling, this varied greatly according to the Sections concerned; the number examined by each controller ranged between one to five boxes per day. To be thorough, this work required a large staff, so that the filing clerks had sometimes to be called upon to help the controllers.

(b) *Filing Rules.* — We have seen that the filing was based on the alphabetical order of the prisoners' surnames and first names.

In practice, however, certain exceptions had to be made to strict alphabetical filing. Surnames can be written in very many ways. If the filing clerks had strictly observed the alphabetical order, cards for the same persons would not all have been filed together, and a great many "tallies" would have been missed. To help the joining up of the cards, various methods of merging were practised: phonetic, or graphic merging, and the two combined.

The following are a few examples of this method of merging in practice.

(1) *Phonetic.*

BAUDHUIN, BAUDOIN, BEAUDOIN.

PEROZ, PERRAUD, PERRAULT, PERREAU, PERREAUT, PERROT,
PEYRAUD, PEYROT.

MAIER, MAJER, MAYER, MEIER, MEJER, MEYER, MAIR, MAJR,
MAYR, MEIR, MEJR, MEYR.

STEWART, STEWARD, STUART.

IRVINE, IRVIN, IRWIN, IRVING, IRWING.

WHITAKER, WHITTAKER, WHITTACKER, WHITEAKER.

SILBERSTEIN, ZILBERSTAJN (Polish phonetic version).

SZABO (original Hungarian form), SABO, SABAU, SABU (Rumanian phonetic version).

Each National Section was led to adopt its own phonetic method of merging. One practice, however, was common to all Sections, the filing of double consonants by the first letter only.

(2) *Graphic.*

BONVARD and BOUVARD.

FERRAND and FERRAUD.

This type of merging was used almost exclusively for French names.

(3) *Phonetic and Graphic.*

LEFAIBRE, LEFEBURE, LEFEBVRE, LEFEVRE.

GANTHIE, GANTHIER, GANTIE, GANTIER, GANTIES, GANTIEZ,
GAULTHIER, GAUTHIER, GAUTHIERS, GAUTHIEZ, GAUTIER.

JOHNSON, JOHNSTON, JOHNSTONE, JONSON, JONNSON, JONSSON.

CRESWELL, CRESSWELL, CRASWELL, GRESSWELL.

SIMON, SIMONS, SIMMONDS, SIMMONS.

Whenever a batch of cards was not, for some reason, filed in its proper alphabetical position, a card of a special colour was inserted in its place, called a "Reference Card", which

stated where it was to be found : thus BOUVARD being merged with BONVARD a reference slip was placed where BOUVARD should have been filed which stated "BOUVARD see under BONVARD".

Before each group of "merged" names was placed a warning card, showing all the spellings included.

In addition to these exceptions to alphabetical filing, certain other rules had to be introduced, as follows :

Compound and double names were usually filed after the principal simple name, e.g. LEROY-BEAULIEU was filed after all the LEROY.

With regard to names preceded by a particle, the ruling was not common to all Sections ; they were filed either following the initial of the particle, or of the principal name. The French Section did not take into account the particles *de*, *De*, *d'* ; for instance, *d'*ASTIER was filed under letter A. All other particles counted, however ; thus, *la* VIGERIE was filed under L.

When only the surname was given, the card was filed in front of all those bearing the same name together with first names.

When only the initial of a first name was given, the card was filed in front of all those with first names beginning with the same letter.

If two or more first names were recorded, only the first counted for filing purposes.

In the event of two persons bearing an identical surname and first name, the filing was based on the dates of birth, the elder being usually placed in front.

The cards forming a batch were always arranged in a fixed order, which was not always the same in the various Sections. The logical method, which proved to be the best for quickly picking up the threads of a particular case, was to arrange the cards by order of date. The enquiry cards on which action was being taken were usually placed first in the batch.

(c) *Research Work*. — The work on the card-index was done both by the filing clerks and the checkers.

The work of the checkers was to start from the various

documents received by the Agency and to make the required search in the card-index. They formed a separate service in all principal Sections, which was either part of the card-index staff, or outside it, according to circumstances.

It should be specified that the filing staff did not merely insert new files into the index, but had also to keep a careful watch for any possible "tallies". Their work was therefore in some respects similar to that of the checkers; both had to bear constantly in mind the filing regulations in force, of which the most important have already been mentioned.

In each Section the removal of cards from the index was subject to general rules, two of which should be mentioned as they were of peculiar importance and applied to all departments of the Agency.

First, the various cards which formed the batch could not be separated or removed singly from the index. It was essential for the person dealing with the case to have the whole batch, and thus the whole history of the case. Moreover, a complete batch was less likely to go astray than a single card.

Secondly, all cards removed from the index had to be replaced by a "pointer", bearing all references necessary for replacing the file on its return to the index. The references had to be sufficiently clear to allow the renewal of the whole batch in case of loss, and included the date of removal from the file and the place where they could be claimed. Even if the batch had been removed from the index, the pointer gave relevant details on the case and allowed action to be taken.

With regard to the pointers, two methods were practised: either to use an outstanding slip, called the "signpost", which had to be made out on every occasion, or to provide each batch of cards with a "permanent pointer", of the same size as the cards, which was never to be removed from the index. The presence of a "permanent pointer" did not dispense the searcher who removed a file from making out a slip with the date and the name of the person responsible. The permanent pointer had, of course, to be kept up to date with all new information received on the particular case.

During the first years, "signpost pointers" only were used at the Central Agency. This system, however, involved a great deal of transcription, whenever cards were taken out of the index; not only had the pointers to show all personal data of the case, the date of the removal of the batch and the name of the person responsible, but also the reference numbers of all cards contained in the batch. When made out in a hurry by busy people, it frequently happened that details were missing, or that the text was illegible.

In consequence, some Sections were led to introduce the "permanent pointer", which bore printed headings, showed all particulars relating to the PW at the top, the remainder of the card being used to record the references of the cards contained in the batch.

Experience showed, however, that the use of this card was only advisable in large Sections, where the daily average of batches taken out of the index was fairly high. This average was in proportion to the volume of work in each Section, i.e. to the average number of data or enquiries regarding one person received within a given period. The volume of work depended upon various factors which related to the nationality of the PW concerned, e.g. frequency of transfers, each entailing a separate communication to the Agency, applications by relatives or by public or private bodies in the various countries, and so on.

Permanent pointers were only made out for cards removed from the index, thus avoiding a waste of valuable time in making out pointers for batches of cards which might never be required.

In practice, filing and checking in the index met with frequent difficulties. The data required for identification were often inadequate and names were often subject to mutilation. In such cases, the mere observance of filing rules would not have sufficed to ensure the "tally" of cards concerning the same person; both filers and checkers had then to use their utmost ingenuity to reach the desired goal.

Here are some of the difficulties created by the lack of sufficient data for identification, and the manner in which these difficulties were met.

In many cases, PW had the same surnames and first names. In order to distinguish them, certain civil and military particulars were necessary, e.g. date and place of birth, first name of father, domicile (address of next of kin), army unit, army and PW numbers.

The most important of all was certainly the army number ; this in itself allowed for the full identification of the PW in civil life, provided of course that the same number was never given to more than one man.

The system of army numbers, as used in several countries where it formed an integral part of each man's identity, and which was often quoted by relatives in their applications, rendered invaluable service to the Central Agency. The work became extremely complicated, however, in cases where this system of numbers was not in current use, or had not been adopted by certain armed forces.

The number allotted to a PW on capture was also of great assistance for this type of research.

When these various particulars were missing or incomplete, searchers had to try to make the cards correspond by piecing together data on capture and the successive places of detention that might be shown on the cards.

If this last attempt gave no result, the search was discontinued and the card put in place in the index, until the arrival of fresh information might help to throw some light on the case.

Other difficulties arose through the mutilation of names or their transliteration in other languages. The documents received at the Agency had often been dictated or copied from other documents, when errors in taking down or reading were inevitable. It also frequently occurred that the writers knew little or nothing of the prisoner's or applicant's language, which resulted in serious mutilations of names, especially in the less common languages.

Cases of this kind could of course not be foreseen, so that no fixed rulings could be made; the correction of errors in the card-index thus depended entirely upon the searcher's experience and intuition. Reference slips were made use of in these cases.

The following are a few examples of mutilation :

Correct spelling *Mutilated*

LUCIRA LUCERA

BAITO BITO

SAITO GAITO

PLETINCKX FLETINECK, PLETINAX, PLERTINX, PLETIVVETLX

BOEYKENS BOEGEHENS.

All these errors were the result of carelessness or ignorance. Some mutilations were, however, conscious. We may quote the case of people belonging to certain racial groups who after emigration, or compulsory or voluntary adoption of a new nationality, had, under political or cultural influence, often adapted the spelling of their names to the language of the new country. In this manner, Greek emigrants to the United States simplified or shortened their names : SAVOPOULOS became SAVAS SELLEVERDIS - VERDIS, MICHAILITSIS - MITCHELL ; some translated them, when GIANNKOPOULOS became JOHNSON, and MARANGOS became CARPENTER. Jews, particularly those of German origin, often did the same, so that NEUMANN became NEWMAN in the United States.

In such cases, the question could only be solved with the help of experts in the language and customs of the peoples concerned.

Amongst the armed forces of the British Commonwealth and the French Union there were racial groups whose language was entirely different from that of the parent State, and for these the Agency sections set up special indexes. This was the practice followed in the British Section for Cypriots, Arabs, Indian troops and South African native troops. The French Colonial Section set up separate indexes in the same way for the Arab-speaking countries (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco), for French West Africa and Indochina.

While the setting up of special indexes simplified the problem, it was by no means sufficient to solve the linguistic difficulties involved in filing names in some languages, and the army

number, when known, remained often the sole means of identifying men whose names were liable to infinite variations. Thus, the French Colonial Section set up, in conjunction with the alphabetical index, a second index based on army numbers from which the searcher could work back to the first index.

It should also be mentioned that the Central Agency, having been allowed the use of the statistical machines of the International Business Machines Corporation, was in a position to draw up lists of prisoners in alphabetical order, by army or PW numbers, according to the needs of the Sections concerned.

Since errors in filing did not occur with the machines, the alphabetical lists thus produced showed correctly the identity of a PW whose batch of cards has been misfiled, or had gone astray in one of the national Sections.

With regard to lists by army or PW numbers, they made it possible, in the case of namesakes or of mutilated names, to add to the relevant batches any fresh information or applications received concerning any given person.

This means of identification could of course only work when all documents received at different times by the Agency for the same man bore the army and PW numbers.

The considerable work entailed in drawing up these lists was as a rule only justified in the large Sections, in so far as they were likely to be frequently consulted.

VIII. WATSON SECTION — THE USE OF THE HOLLERITH MACHINES BY THE CENTRAL AGENCY

The study of the general working methods of the Central Agency would be incomplete without special mention being made of this Section which, although entirely technical, nevertheless constituted one of the most important innovations adopted by the Central Agency in 1939.

An international firm with head offices in Geneva, the "Phoebus Company for the Development of the Lighting Industry" had in use before the war a set of statistical machines made by the International Business Machines Corporation, whose head offices are in the United States. The Phoebus Company having been obliged to shut down, following on the events of 1939, some of the directors, who realized how useful the machines would be to the Agency, which had just begun work, approached the International Committee.

On examination it was found that a number of the machines could not easily be adapted to Agency work, and the Phoebus Company placed the matter before the International Business Machines Corporation through the European branch, whose head offices were also in Geneva. It was at that point that the attention of the President of the I.B.M., Mr. Thomas J. Watson, was drawn to the matter. He understood at once its importance for relief work and made good his generous interest by cabling on October 16, 1939, to the European Branch of the I.B.M., as follows: "Donate use of machines. Recommended you give space, furnish cards and do work gratis in our office Geneva."

Six weeks after the outbreak of the war, therefore, it had been arranged in principle that the ICRC should have the use, free of charge, of this highly efficient business machinery. In the following December, the Watson Section of the Central Agency was set up, to employ the proffered machines and to begin the necessary preliminary work.

(1) *Basic Methods*

Before describing the contribution made by the Watson Section to the work of the Central Agency, a summary explanation should be given of the way the statistical machines work and what they achieve.

The machines used by the Agency were of the type invented at the end of the last century by an American, Hollerith. He was so impressed by the enormous amount of labour involved in classifying the data of the tenth census of the population of the U.S.A. in 1880, that he formed the idea of substituting mechanical means for human labour, which is slow and liable to error. His efforts finally led to the invention of the "Hollerith Machines", based on the use of cards perforated according to a code and worked by an electro-magnetic process.

By the Hollerith system, information is marked on cards by perforations at given intervals. The cards contain twelve horizontal lines and 80 vertical columns, allowing for the inscription of 80 figures or ciphers. In any of the 80 columns, each figure from 0 to 9 is punched on the same horizontal line; for instance, 0 is always punched on the third line, 1 on the fourth line and so forth. Letters are formed by punching two holes; the letter A, for example, is shown by a perforation on the third line and another on the fifth.

Numerical codes are usually employed for transcribing information to cards. This method not only compensates for the restricted number of columns, but also facilitates sorting the cards by categories. Each column of a card used for a specified object has a fixed purpose; when used for the census of population, for instance, the thirtieth column of each card may be reserved for the civil status of the persons concerned.

(2) *Work of the Watson Section*

(A). *For the Central Agency.*

We must first point out that the service required by the Agency from the Hollerith machines did not correspond exactly with the purpose for which they were originally designed ; they were intended for statistical research work and accounting.

The Central Agency, indeed, was not concerned with the census of people or of categories of goods, the object of statistics, nor with the setting out of items in a balance sheet, as done in accountancy. On the other hand, it would be useful to have available, in plain language, lists of PW classified according to the requirements of the Sections, in alphabetical order or in a numerical sequence of any one of the items of identification on the cards. Therefore, if for each PW a punched card could be made out with all the useful items of identification, it would then be easy to sort these cards and make up, on the basis of this process, the lists that were required.

The Watson Section used three types of machines : *perforators*, *sorters* and *tabulators*. The first were for the punching of the cards. They were fitted with a keyboard similar to that of a typewriter. The pressing of a key would cause the punching of one or two rectangular holes, together with the printed transcription, at the top of the card, of the corresponding digit or letter.

The insertion and ejection of the card was entirely automatic ; the mechanism of perforation, set in motion by pressing a key, was itself electric. Lastly, by means of a special device, data common to an entire set of cards, e. g. nationality, could be punched automatically.

The cards then passed through a second machine, the sorter, where they were counted and sorted, at will, in alphabetical order or in a numerical sequence of any one of the items of identification. This sorting operated as follows : a metal brush could be shifted according to the column with which the sorting was concerned ; each time it encountered a perforation, the

brush caused an electric circuit to be closed, and the current thus set up started a mechanism, which made the cards fall into the corresponding pocket.

This automatic sorting, operating at the rate of 400 cards a minute, was made on the basis of one perforation at a time. As was seen above, each digit was expressed by a single perforation and each letter by two perforations. In order to arrange a group of numbers in a numerical sequence, according to data punched in a three column field, the cards had to be passed through the machine three times: — first on the units column, then on the tens column, and finally on the hundreds column.

The sorting of a series of names each with, possibly, as many as six letters, required twelve consecutive passages of cards through the machine, corresponding to the twelve holes by which a name of six letters was indicated on the cards.

By a similar principle, the tabulating machine produced from the cards already classified by the sorter, the lists and statistical or accounting statements required. Counters could add or subtract the data indicated by the perforations, and the results were printed by the machine. The tabulator produced the text of the punched cards at the rate of 80 cards a minute.

To this set of three machines, which assured the ordinary tasks of the Section, were added various auxiliary machines. Amongst these was the *duplicator*, the purpose of which was to reproduce, omitting the corresponding printed text, the cards already perforated, and the *interpreter*, which completed the perforated cards by the automatic printing of the text. One could thus obtain, in case of need, a double set of cards.

Thus, the Watson Section was able to make out for the National Sections, lists of prisoners in alphabetical order, in numerical sequence according to army or PW number, in order of regiment, and so forth.

The alphabetical lists were used in certain cases to communicate information regarding PW to the official Bureaux or National Red Cross Societies. Moreover, the drawing up of alphabetical lists of all the names of PW to be found in a card-index, served to reveal the existence of PW whose cards, filed in the wrong place, had till then eluded search.

The numerical lists by army or PW number, proved to be an invaluable help for researches in the index. By reference to them, names mutilated or wrongly filed could be traced, thus producing "tallies" which had escaped direct search in the index.

The outstanding aid given by the Watson Machines, however, was unquestionably in the drawing up of lists of PW and missing in army unit sequence. Those lists were useful as a starting point in the regimental enquiries, already mentioned, which were undertaken by the French Section. It will be recalled that this consisted in the systematic questioning of PW on the fate of comrades in their particular unit who were reported missing. That was possible by virtue of lists of missing, according to service units, and of PW according to regiment. Only the sorting machines, dealing with 24,000 cards an hour, and the tabulators, transcribing 4,800 names in the same time, were able to make up those two types of lists. It can be said that, in this case, the machines accomplished a creative piece of work, since no team of human workers could have carried out such a considerable task quickly enough for the result to be put to effective use.

(B). *For the Relief Division.*

The Watson Section also did a series of jobs for the Relief Division, which was independent of the Central Agency. Although that important activity was not connected with the Agency itself, it should be mentioned here, since the Watson Section, from the point of view of administration, was part of the Central Agency.

The Relief Division soon found it would be necessary to have at its disposal, both for its own use and that of donors, periodical statements of stocks of goods stored on its own warehouses in Switzerland, and of inward and outward figures. The Hollerith machines, devised for statistical and accounting work, were the very means for accomplishing this work. Cards were punched from the inward and outward warehouse dockets. Those cards carried the following data: description of goods,

donors, number of packages, weight, origin, date of receipt or dispatch, consignees, and so forth.

Once made up, the cards were sorted by warehouse, then by class of goods and passed through the tabulators; these totalized entries and subtracted shipments, and showed the stock of each type of goods in each warehouse, transcribing simultaneously the indications punched in the cards. Thus, a detailed statement of incoming and outgoing stores to date was obtained.

The punched cards made up on the basis of the outward dockets made it possible to draw up statements by category and by camp of all goods consigned within a given period.

The Watson Section also produced special statements showing the movement of goods which the British and the American Red Cross Societies had placed at the disposal of the ICRC for distribution among nationals of other countries.

Besides the punched cards made up as described, from the entry and consignment dockets, others were made up from the receipts which the camp leaders returned to Geneva. These cards provided the Transit Departments of the Relief Division with statements of goods received by each camp. Those statements, when checked against the statements of consignments from the warehouses, enabled the Transit Departments to verify the safe arrival of the goods.

Copies of these various statements were regularly forwarded to the National Red Cross Societies concerned.

Finally, the Watson Section prepared various statistics for the Relief Division and summarized from 1945 goods received per year, by camp and by category.

(C). Organization of the Watson Section.

The Watson Section was divided into three groups, corresponding to the three stages of its work.

The first group included the staff responsible for the preparing of the work ¹. It was split up into various subsections,

¹ With the exception of the preparation of the work to be done for the Relief Division. That was done by the Relief Division itself.

the counterpart of those departments of the ICRC which required the help of the Watson machines. The sub-sections drew up the code to be used for each separate piece of work and then went on to the actual preparation of the work, which included in particular the inscription of the figures of the selected code on the original documents, and the checking of the cards when they had been punched.

The second group was concerned with the punching machines. The staff working them saw to the punching of the cards from the details in the documents and according to the instructions supplied by the sub-section which made the preparation.

The third group worked the sorting machines and tabulators, as well as the auxiliary machines previously mentioned.

In the course of 1945, at the height of its activity, the Watson Section staff comprised between 70 and 80 assistants, divided as follows :

	Number of assistants	Number of machines
Managing Staff	3	—
1st Group (preparation)	40 to 50	—
2nd "	16	13 perforators 9 sorters
3rd "	10	4 tabulators 4 reproducers 1 interpreter

Four members of this staff, including a mechanic, belonged to the International Business Machines Corporation and were kindly lent to the ICRC.

To conclude, a few figures are given below on the work of the Watson Section from 1939 to the end of 1946 :

Number of cards punched	7,515,073
Number of cards reproduced	1,058,968
Total of cards made up	8,574,041
Number of cards sorted	66,440,399
Number of times cards passed through the machines	315,783,076
Number of cards passed through the tabulator. .	24,462,741

PART II

NATIONAL AND SPECIAL SECTIONS

Having given an outline of the general operation of the Central PW Agency, an account in detail will follow concerning the work of each of the National and Special Sections of which it was composed. In each of these Sections the principles applied were the same, but the circumstances of the war, the characteristics of each State or of each category of war victims, caused considerable differences in their features, both in structure and development.

We shall first deal with the National Sections, in the order in which they were set up, and which roughly corresponded to the entry of belligerents into the war. We shall then discuss the Special Sections.

Polish Section

The Polish Section was set up on September 14, 1939 and was called upon, throughout its service, to deal with cases that were of great complexity owing to the vicissitudes of this country and of its armed forces during the second World War. In 1939, the whole area of the national territory was occupied. The German Government in fact held that Poland had ceased to exist as a sovereign State, which made the task of the ICRC extremely difficult. A number of Poles, however, who were living abroad or who succeeded in leaving their occupied territory, joined the Allied forces and within their ranks, or in units of their own, continued the fight against the Axis Powers, while others carried on the struggle against the occupying Power within Poland itself.

In these circumstances, the work of the Polish Section was less that of an intermediary between the belligerents for transmitting official information than that of an information bureau for individuals and private organizations. The number of applications relating to members of the forces or civilians, who both during and after the war arrived from all parts of the world, led to the submission of a very large number of enquiries to organizations of every kind.

The Polish campaign began on September 1, 1939, with the invasion by the German armies. On September 17, the Soviet forces in their turn crossed the frontiers and, on September 27, the entry of the Germans into Warsaw put an end to military operations proper.

A very large part of the Polish army was captured by the German and Soviet forces; furthermore, a considerable

number of men took refuge in neighbouring countries, where they were interned.

The Soviet Government, not being a signatory to the 1929 PW Convention, forwarded no information on Polish PW in their hands. Applications received by the Section regarding these men could therefore not be answered. Later, it seemed possible for these PW to send messages to their relatives, but this exchange of news apparently ceased after the spring of 1940.

The German Official Bureau ¹, until February 1940, sent in lists of Polish members of the forces taken prisoner by the German Army, but after that date these communications ceased, and the only particulars received by the Polish Section consisted of lists of PW who where in need, which camp leaders were authorized to forward.

It was not until 1943 that the German Official Bureau began once more to send the Agency lists of Polish PW, but these referred to officers only, as most ranks had meanwhile been converted into civilian workers and given that status. Fortunately, the Polish Section was still able to undertake enquiries from the OKW or the German Red Cross in behalf of these PW and civilian workers.

As regards Polish members of the forces who had taken refuge in September 1939 in neighbouring countries ², either individually or by whole units, the National Red Cross Societies furnished the Central Agency with nominal lists. Moreover, these men, anxious about their relatives who had stayed in Poland, had since October sent the Agency messages and letters from which valuable data were collected on the writers themselves. These were filed by the Section, who then saw to the transcription and forwarding of messages and letters. This particular work, which entailed too great a burden, was taken over in March 1940 by the Civilian Message Section.

¹ Army Information Bureau for Casualties and PW of the German High Command, generally known as the "OKW".

² Esthonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania, Slovakia, Sweden and Yugoslavia.

The internees did not as a rule stay for long in the countries which had received them ; the majority soon left in order to form new units in France and in Great Britain, which took up the fight once more against Germany, alongside British and French troops.

As a result of the occupation, Poland was cut off from the rest of the world. Besides the natural wish to receive and to give news felt by all those who had relatives or friends in that country, much anxiety was aroused by the arrest of numbers of Polish citizens by the occupying authorities.

In consequence, the Polish Section received a flood of applications, concerning for the most part Jewish people. The Section responded by the despatch of messages, whenever exact addresses appeared on these applications. When these referred to persons domiciled in the German zone of occupation, the messages were transmitted through the German Red Cross. It was soon considered that it would entail too great a danger to the Jewish addressees to send these messages, so the practice was abandoned. Relations with the Russian zone were far more difficult, and there were, at one time, about 100,000 applications awaiting despatch for this zone.

* * *

During the winter of 1939-1940, a large proportion of the Poles interned in other countries had, as already mentioned, reached France, in order to fight the Germans. These men, together with the Poles who were living in France, formed Polish units which, in May and June 1940, took part in the engagements in France. The Poles captured during this campaign by the German forces were considered as French PW, and their names were sent as such to the Central Agency by the OKW.

The names of Polish members of the forces who died and were buried in France were subsequently sent to the Agency by the French Ministry for Ex-Servicemen.

The place filled by Polish units in the battle formation of the French armies decided the fate of the members of those units who escaped death or captivity. Men who had fought

on the right wing of the front took refuge in Switzerland, those on the left wing got over to England, and those in the army groups of the centre made their way towards the South of France.

The Swiss Federal Commissariat for Internment and Accommodation sent the Agency lists of Polish internees in Switzerland. The case of these men, who remained in that country until 1945, caused no difficulties to the Polish Section.

The men who succeeded in reaching Great Britain either formed new Polish units in that country, or were incorporated in British units, mainly in the R.A.F. The Polish Section usually applied to the Polish Red Cross in London for data enabling it to reply to the many applications for investigation and news concerning these men.

The German Authorities treated members of these units who fell into their hands as British PW; their names therefore appeared on the lists of PW from countries of the Commonwealth which were sent by the German Official Bureau to the Agency. The case of these men was dealt with jointly by the Polish and the British Sections; applications and enquiries devolved on the Polish Section, whilst the British Section transmitted all information received concerning Poles enlisted in the forces of the Commonwealth countries, to the London Official Bureau, together with the data for British PW.

Some of the Poles who had made their way to the free zone in France, reached Algeria and Morocco by crossing Spain secretly. Some of them were arrested during this journey by the Spanish authorities and interned in the camp of Miranda de Ebro.

In the South of France and North Africa, Polish soldiers who had retreated there were rounded up in labour camps; the Section was in touch with them through the help of the Polish Red Cross in France, which had meanwhile become the Society for Relief to Poles in France (*Groupeement d'aide aux Polonais en France*).

Many of these men however escaped and joined up with the Polish troops who were fighting with the British forces or the Free French Forces.

This situation, which developed from the Battle of France, brought in a flood of applications mainly from the Polish Red

Cross in Warsaw. Owing to the wandering of Polish soldiers about Europe, it was often a most difficult matter to deal with these applications.

* * *

The war which broke out in June 1941 between Germany and the Soviet Union had considerable reactions on the Polish Section. The U.S.S.R. became in fact from that date a Power allied with Poland. In these conditions, the commander-in-chief of the Polish Forces abroad was able to conclude two agreements, in July and December 1941, with the Soviet Government, one regulating the liberation of Polish PW and their next of kin in Russia, and the other the formation in that country of a Polish army.

Subsequently, a great part of the troops in this army left the U.S.S.R., accompanied by their relatives, and were ordered to Teheran. They formed units which were to reinforce the British Army in the Middle East. From then onwards they shared the lot of the British, Dominion and American troops. They fought at Tobruk, took part in the offensive of El Alamein, and, later, in the landing in Italy, where they were responsible for a sector of the front until the end of hostilities.

Meanwhile their families had been sent, a few at a time, from Teheran to India, Kenya, Tanganyika, Rhodesia and Mexico. In 1944, the Polish Red Cross at Nairobi sent complete lists of these civilians to the Central Agency. The Polish Section acted as intermediary between the troops and their relatives in the transmission of a very great number of messages. It also, at the request of relatives in Poland, opened numerous enquiries with the Polish Red Cross in Teheran and Cairo concerning these men.

The Polish Section was thus able to deal with cases not only relating to PW and civilian internees, like the other National Sections, but also with a very great number of cases concerning members of the forces and free civilians who had been deported or displaced as a result of the war.

Whereas in most of the other National Sections almost all enquiries concerned PW or internees, made by applicants

usually living in their ordinary place of domicile, in the Polish Section as many applications for news came from civilians who had remained in Poland as from PW, from members of the forces on active service abroad and civilian refugees in many countries. This complicated the Section's task to an appreciable degree. The lack of a central official Information Bureau greatly increased the difficulties of Poles separated by the war in tracing their relatives.

* * *

In 1944 the Russian offensive against the German forces took on a far greater extension. Polish troops, consisting of men who for various reasons had not left the U.S.S.R. in 1941 with their comrades, took part in this offensive. These men formed the nucleus of the new Polish army which grew as the national territory was liberated.

At the end of June 1944, when Russian forces arrived in the outskirts of the Polish capital, whose population at that time numbered 1,300,000, the Warsaw rising broke out, one of the most tragic episodes of the war. After desperate fighting between Poles and Germans, the insurgents were forced to capitulate in October 1944. A considerable part of the population was killed during these events, and some 20,000 members of the Polish underground army, including numerous women combatants, were taken prisoner.

The OKW did not transmit the names of these PW to the Central Agency, but in many cases camp leaders supplied lists. Moreover, prisoners themselves wrote to the Agency to report themselves and to ask that next of kin should be informed, or search made for them ; in most instances, too, they asked for relief.

Meanwhile, the German occupying forces had evacuated the remainder of the civil population from Warsaw, now entirely destroyed. The inhabitants were gradually reassembled in Pruszkow (Warsaw district), whence the able-bodied were sent to Germany to work, whilst others, such as children and old people were scattered throughout Poland. These displace-

placements of the population caused a great influx of applications for news from relatives and friends. Those concerned also sent the Central Agency a great number of requests from Germany for relief supplies. On the basis of these requests the Polish Section drew up lists and passed them on to the Delegation of the Polish Red Cross in Geneva, who was thus enabled to send foodstuffs through the intermediary of the Relief Department of the ICRC.

In the autumn of 1944, postal communications with Poland were suspended and the Agency sent messages intended for that country through the intermediary of the Union of Polish Patriots in Teheran.

In 1945, the Central Committee of the Polish Red Cross was definitely reorganized in Warsaw, whilst the Polish Red Cross in London ceased to bear this title¹. As the extensive data in the possession of the Polish Red Cross in London, including the largest existing card-index on Poles abroad, had not been sent to Warsaw, where the Red Cross files had been completely destroyed during the rising, the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw found itself unable to reply to many applications. Applicants therefore turned to the Central Agency, which served to prolong the work of the Polish Section.

The Agency, which had copies of the documents it had forwarded to the Red Cross in Warsaw and of the original documents it had received from them, had copies made of these papers for that organization, thus helping it to once more build up its records.

* * *

The ending of hostilities did not, for many reasons, put a stop to the work of the Polish Section. For one thing, a number of Poles were unable to return home, owing to various causes; this applied to part of the ex-prisoners and deportees in Germany, to a large number of members of Polish units who had fought with the Allied forces, and to civilian refugees in various

¹ This Society later took the name of "Relief Society for Poles". The Cairo branch, however, continued under the name of the Polish Red Cross.

countries. In the second place, the break-down of postal communications between certain countries, which continued long after the war, resulted in the large number of Poles in those countries being completely cut off, and the Central Agency alone was able to help them. It was, therefore, again to the Agency that these people applied, in order to resume or simply maintain contact with their relatives. In the third place, the fact of captivity in Allied hands or that the majority of Poles recruited by force to the German army were missing since the fighting, caused a considerable flow of applications to reach the Agency after the end of the war ¹. Furthermore, the Polish Section was called upon to draw up numerous certificates of captivity and to undertake steps to secure death certificates. Finally, it still received a large number of applications concerning the disappearance of prisoners and deportees whose fate, it must be feared, will never be known ².

The maximum number of staff employed in the Section was twenty-five.

¹ Some of these men deserted to join the Allied forces, and as relatives were in most unaware of this, search was extremely difficult.

² The Polish Section was frequently asked to undertake enquiries concerning missing members of the army fighting with the Soviet forces; as there was no means of taking action in this matter, such requests were simply forwarded to the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw.

French Section ¹

The French Section was opened on September 14, 1939. In the history of the Central Agency, it occupies a particular place, as being the first of the major Sections in point of time. The trend of military operations in May and June 1940, followed by the Franco-German armistice of June 22, led to the greater part of the French army falling into German hands; within a few weeks more than 1,700,000 men were taken prisoner. The sudden influx of capture cards and of German official lists abruptly laid a gigantic task upon the Agency, whose departments were then still rudimentary. Within the space of six months, from May to November 1940, the staff of the French Section had to be increased from a mere ten to several hundred persons.

Through stress of circumstances, the French Section served in a sense as a testing ground for the Central Agency. Working methods, which conditions led the Section to adopt on a large scale, were often applied later in other Sections of the Agency.

Up to the summer of 1941, the French Section was extremely active. It was only then that it finished the task of communicating and recording on cards the particulars received in Geneva as a result of the Battle of France, and that it was able to make considerable reductions in staff. But many other tasks had still to be fulfilled, such as the search for the missing and countless enquiries concerning French PW in Germany. The operations in which the Free French Forces under General de Gaulle were engaged, and the existence of troops outside the

¹ See also pp. 208 sqq.

home country, but under the orders of the Vichy Government, brought in their wake fresh work for the French Section.

For the sake of clarity, we shall consider separately the two great series of events which mark the history of France during the second World War : (1) the campaign of 1939-1940 and its consequences ; (2) the constitution of the Free French forces. These two divisions, covering the period 1939-1944, are followed by a third, dealing with (1) the national liberation, (2) the repatriation of PW and other war victims, and (3) post-war work.

Following on the establishing, in the summer of 1940, of the French Committee of National Liberation by General de Gaulle in London, and the entrance upon the scene of the armed forces recruited by that Committee, the French Section had to deal simultaneously with two sets of French authorities.

In France itself, the official Government departments with which the French Section had to work, repeatedly changed their directorate, style and headquarters. Matters concerning PW were not centralized in a single official Bureau. The Central Agency forwarded lists of PW to the *Service des prisonniers de guerre* in Lyons¹, which was subordinate to the Secretary of State for War. Death notices of PW were sent to the *Service central de l'état civil, des successions et des sépultures militaires* in Paris, which was under the Secretary of State for Ex-Service Men. These offices were soon split up by the demarcation line which separated the occupation zone. Each of these offices had thus to open a branch in the opposite zone, and new offices were thus set up in Paris and Clermont-Ferrand.

As regards Free France, official Bureaux were successively installed in London, then in Algiers, and the French Section had to keep up constant relations with these also.

The foregoing will give a preliminary idea of the difficulties encountered by the Section, until the country was liberated.

¹ From September 1939 to May 1940, the lists had been sent to the Ministry of War in Paris ; from June to August 1940, to the Secretary of State for War in Vichy. From September 1940, they were sent to the above Service in Lyons, which had just been set up by the Vichy Government.

One of the features of the French Section throughout the war was the direct contact it maintained with the next of kin in France. In June 1940, circumstances led it — apparently for a few weeks only — to act as substitute for the official Bureaux and the French Red Cross, which were disorganized by the rapid succession of events, and to communicate direct to the French next of kin the news received about PW and the dead. This practice was never entirely abandoned ; the Section continued to correspond as frequently with the next of kin as with the Government departments. Thus, the Section was enabled to act as a humanitarian liaison office, independently of all political considerations.

I. THE CAMPAIGN OF 1939-1940 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Military events and the capture of PW

During the first eight months of the war, the number of French combatants taken prisoner was small. The first list drawn up by the official German Bureau ¹ reached the Section on October 2, 1939 ; it gave the names of eighteen combatants captured on September 9 during a reconnaissance. These particulars were sent the same day by photostat to the Ministry of War in Paris ².

The small staff then working in the Section knew by heart most of the names of the PW who had been notified ; they hardly required to refer to the four boxes which then made up the French card-index. Early in May 1940, the total number of captures and deaths of combatants notified by the O.K.W. barely exceeded one thousand, to whom should be added several hundred civilian internees announced by the German Foreign Office.

¹ " Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgefangene " (Army Information Bureau for War Missing and Prisoners of War) of the Supreme Army Command, a bureau frequently referred to under the denomination " OKW ".

² Later, lists were sent to the Secretary of State for War at Vichy, then to the subordinate *Service des prisonniers de guerre*, in Lyons.

This almost complete calm was suddenly broken on May 10 by the general attack of the German Wehrmacht on the Western front. The French forces had to bear the brunt of this offensive and its effects. The break-through on the Meuse and the lightning advance of the German forces led to the capture of increasing numbers of French troops, whereas the roads were thronged with civilians trying to flee before the invader. Material and moral chaos spread rapidly throughout the country. On June 5, after several days of calm on the Somme, the German attack was resumed. Paris fell on June 14, and on June 22, France signed at Compiègne the armistice convention with Germany, by virtue of which the major part of her forces were taken prisoner.

Influx of applications

The effect of these outstanding events on the French Section was practically instantaneous. Countless families were, from one moment to the next, a prey to the greatest anxiety about the fate of near relatives, military or civilian, with whom they had lost all contact. The French Government offices and the French Red Cross had neither the staff nor the organization needed to undertake at an hour's notice the immense task, which events laid upon them. In addition, most of the French agencies had left Paris and their new address was as yet unknown.

In the circumstances, the French families, many of whom still had memories of the Agency of 1914-1918, were convinced that Geneva would, sooner or later, be in a position to give them news which would relieve their fears. A flood of letters submerged the Agency during the weeks that followed. Whereas the French Section had received 3,755 letters only between September 1939 and the end of May 1940, it now had to deal with 1,047,525 from June to December 1940; of this number 358,146 arrived in August alone. To these figures should be added 221,284 standard enquiry cards, received between June and December 1940. The total incoming mail reached 60,000 items on certain days. Hundreds of mail bags crammed with

letters arrived, and the picture of these stacks of mail will long be remembered.

The Agency's equipment was still rudimentary, when it was suddenly confronted by a task on a scale rarely known to the Agency of 1914. Each letter had to be read and a corresponding card made out. If the work was to serve useful purpose, it had to be done in a relatively short space of time. Fortunately, a large number of voluntary workers were available in Geneva ; they numbered 850 in August and September 1940¹. The Auxiliary Sections which had been set up in several Swiss towns, were called upon to the fullest extent. Twelve of these Sections, comprising several hundred voluntary workers, laboured at that time almost exclusively for the French Section. The paid workers of the Section numbered 350 at the beginning of 1941.

From June 1940 to December 31, 1941, more than 774,000 letters of enquiry were transcribed on to cards. It was only by a minute subdivision of labour that such an immense task could be accomplished. The work was complicated by the fact that many of the letters included several enquiries ; besides the details needed to identify the missing, most of them supplied a mass of additional particulars, which wasted a great deal of time.

To secure the greatest possible speed and efficiency, the Agency published and printed large numbers of standard enquiry cards for missing combatants, called "Card 275". Its use became widespread throughout the war in most countries. It was also reprinted by several departmental committees of the French Red Cross, and by other associations. From June 1940 to December 31, 1941, the French Section received 621,284 of these cards.

Many applicants believed that the Agency already possessed the lists of French PW in Germany, and enclosed letters for these men. Up to the end of 1940, the Section received close on 100,000 letters, which were forwarded to the camps in Germany, as soon as the lists of PW reached Geneva.

¹ These 850 voluntary workers corresponded to about 250 persons doing a full-time eight-hour day.

Receipt of News

The first data concerning the Battle of France received by the French Section were single items sent by local branches of the French, Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburg Red Cross Societies, by various associations, and by private persons; the PW themselves often supplied news also. These hastily established documents were as varied in appearance as in shape and size, and were often difficult to decipher; they gave the names of PW halted for a few hours in some given place, or who were in transit camps, or marching on the roads towards Germany.

The taking of some two million men within a few weeks set the German military authorities the difficult task of communicating their names to Geneva. Owing to the vast number of men who had to be registered, it was likely that several months would elapse before the names of all French PW would be recorded at the Agency. In actual fact, the first official list of French PW connected with this campaign, giving captures made on May 15, reached Geneva by June 6; but lists continued to arrive until March 1941. On December 31, 1940, the lists received numbered 163,667 pages; taking an average of eight names per page, these represented over 1,300,000 names. On March 31, 1941, practically all the names of the 1,700,000 French PW were known.

In the circumstances, the system of sending capture cards to the Central Agency, which had been launched a short time before on the proposal of the ICRC, was put to its first large-scale test and proved itself to be invaluable. These cards, of which over 900,000 reached the French Section in 1940, often brought the names of PW several months before the official lists did so.

Gradually, as the capture cards, official lists and other data came in, the next of kin were advised direct of the capture, welfare, number and address of the PW. Applications were not awaited, and a separate information service was opened to handle this considerable piece of work. These communications were made on a printed standard card, with spaces to be

filled in. From May 1940 to July 1941, 911,159 of these cards were sent out. At the latter date, the Agency decided to stop sending these unsolicited communications, and information was supplied only when there was a "tally" in the index. It was properly supposed that all PW had by that time been able to get into touch with their relatives through the card which every PW, by virtue of the Convention of 1929, is allowed to send home, informing his family of his capture.

The unsolicited and direct communication of news to relatives practised by the French Section in 1940, did not dispense the ICRC from its duty of notifying the country of origin, i. e. the French authorities at Vichy. To give them immediate information before the arrival of the German official lists, the capture cards served to make up lists of French PW. These lists were established by the Hollerith Business Machines, which had just been provided. The first lists were handed on June 29 and July 17, 1940, to the Secretary of State for War in Vichy by representatives of the ICRC. During the autumn of 1940, the establishing of these lists was stopped. By that time, official nominal rolls arrived in large numbers from Germany, and the French authorities found sufficient data in the photostats which were sent to them.

We have said that the French Section received, by March 31, 1941, the lists of all the PW taken during the Battle of France. But lists still continued to arrive after that date. Prisoners were constantly being transferred from one camp to another in Germany, and these transfers gave rise to fresh lists.

The lists received by the French Section during the whole war totalled 525,106 pages. The lists forwarded by the O.K.W. were of a uniform pattern, very detailed and well drawn up, and constituted a valuable foundation on which to work.

Intermediary between the next of kin and the PW

Throughout the whole period of captivity, the Section served as an intermediary in many matters, between the French PW and their relatives. It did this, despite the fact that the

Vichy Government had a liaison agency in Berlin, the so-called "Diplomatic Service for PW", under Ambassador Scapini. In view of the large number of PW and the long duration of the war, this role of liaison agent entailed a great deal of work for the French Section. From 1941 on, it was in fact its chief business.

Contact with the PW was established through their spokesmen. The all-important social part which these representatives played in the camp, made them peculiarly fitted to handle PW matters of all kinds: transmission of news, often of a very personal nature, investigations and enquiries about PW, and so forth. Regular and useful contact was very soon established between Geneva and the spokesmen in most of the camps in Germany. Since 1941, they were even one of the characteristic features of the work of the French Section. The Section also made many enquiries with the camp commanders and the official German Information Bureau. Through its central PW card-index, the Bureau was able, in particular, to locate men whom the Section had lost sight of (for instance, escaped and recaptured PW).

The so-called barbed-wire complex, which lowered their morale, led some PW to give up all idea of sending news to their families, who then enquired in Geneva about them. In such cases, the Section sent to the PW's representative a double enquiry card, the reply-half of which was either given to the PW, who could reassure his next of kin himself, or was used by the spokesman to send news about him. This was a valuable means of reaching these men and rousing them from their apathy.

As time wore on, steadily increasing quantities of official documents and papers had to be sent to the camps, to be signed by PW. For this purpose, the Section opened a separate service. Close on 156,000 documents of all kinds passed through the Agency during the war: powers of attorney, allotment forms, wills, marriage declarations, bills of sale, liquidation notices, etc. The documents were assembled by the *Service des prisonniers de guerre* in Lyons and Paris, and forwarded once or twice a week to the French Section, who acknowledged the receipt of each document. The papers were sorted out according to camps, and dispatched once or twice a week in the

form of collective consignments to the camp spokesmen, with a covering list and a circular explaining how they were to be signed. After signature, the documents were sent back by the PW representative to the French Section, who in turn forwarded them to the French agencies concerned.

Amongst the documents thus transmitted were many marriage certificates. By virtue of war-time provisions published by the French authorities, a PW could sign his own marriage declarations in camp, before witnesses. The certificates bearing the signatures of the fiancées were sent from France to the French Section, which forwarded them to the camp spokesmen. The PW signed before witnesses, and the documents were returned to France through the Central Agency. The Section kept a card-index of these documents. Throughout the war, 2,570 declarations were sent to Germany, 1,820 of which led to marriages, and were returned to Geneva bearing the man's signature.

One of the chief duties of the French Section, in its role as an intermediary between PW camps and relatives, was to forward news of sick and wounded PW. Great care was paid to these; lists sent by army hospital commanders, doctors' reports, messages from the spokesmen and from fellow prisoners were given priority. When the illness did not seem serious, the particulars sent by the hospital commanders were forwarded by photostat to the *Service des prisonniers de guerre* in Lyons. If the news appeared grave, the Section notified the relatives direct by letter, to prepare them, as far as could be, for news of possible death.

Details of deaths were collected in Germany and forwarded to the Agency by the German Red Cross. This information included the death certificate proper, established on a form with the heading of the ICRC and signed by the doctor who had certified the death, and also by a witness, together with letters from chaplains, spokesmen, and fellow prisoners, describing the last moments of the deceased man and the burial service. On the grounds of these data, the French Section wrote to the next of kin a letter, which was sent with a photostat of the death certificate to the central *Service de l'Etat civil, des successions et des sépultures militaires* in Paris; this agency

notified the next of kin through the mayor of the home commune. The French Section communicated 15,140 death certificates during the war. At the request, of the *Service des prisonniers de guerre* in Lyon, a copy of the letter to the next of kin was also sent to them.

Agreements concluded in 1942 between the German and French authorities allowed PW to be "transformed" into civilian workers. The ICRC had no knowledge of the wording of these agreements, and the German authorities never supplied them with lists of these "transformed" PW. The men generally remained in the camp where they had been detained as PW, so that the spokesmen were able to continue to supply information and reply to the enquiries which the Section sent them.

Search for civilians

Side by side with enquiries about combatants from next of kin, the Section received, from the summer of 1940, a steadily increasing number of applications concerning the whereabouts of civilians. These came especially from PW in Germany. The number of French civilians whom events had driven from their homes was considerable. The Section started many enquiries through the *mairies* and the information bureaux which had been opened for refugees; but the work was extremely slow on account of the immense number of enquiries.

The French Post Office was also faced with similar difficulties. A card-index for the centralization of all possible data about the residences of displaced civilians was opened in Lyons. The post offices issued cards, on which the refugees wrote their former and present addresses. At the request of the Agency, a duplicate of each card was sent to it by the Post Office. The Section thus had available a most useful means of research which enabled it to answer a great many enquiries¹.

With references to displaced civilians, mention should be made of the many enquiries made about Alsatians and Lorrainers who had taken refuge in the south of France.

¹ As on Dec. 31, 1941, this card-index comprised over one million cards.

Search for the missing

Enquiries about military personnel who were posted missing in the course of the Battle of France were one of the principal activities of the French Section.

Very soon after that campaign, the Section had to start enquiries about combatants whom their relations believed to have been killed in the fighting in a given area. These investigations were in particular undertaken with the *mairies* of the places near which the fighting had occurred. The Section thus secured lists of the graves of combatants buried in many cemeteries in France, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Norway; these lists included in all 5,681 names. The German military authorities also soon began sending to Geneva lists of French dead whose bodies had been found on the battlefields during the advance of the German forces. These particulars enabled answers to be given to many relatives. A first step was thus made in the task of finding the missing.

By the end of 1940, the French Section realized that these investigations, which were somewhat haphazard, were inadequate. A systematic scheme was needed to clear up the numerous cases of men who, to all appearances, had not been captured by the enemy, but must be considered as missing. The number of applications which it had not yet been possible to answer, as no particulars had been received from Germany, increased to a striking degree. These applications had unavoidably remained in abeyance and finally exceeded 40,000—probably the actual number of missing for the French Army in 1940.

It was then decided to institute a methodical questioning on the French PW in Germany about the members of their units who could be looked upon as missing during operations. Since events were still comparatively recent, it seemed fairly likely that in many cases valuable evidence would thus be secured.

Such were the circumstances in which the French Section had recourse to the so-called "regimental enquiries", which became one of the most original features of the Agency's work in 1941 and 1942. The Hollerith Machines, which had just been made

available, were used to institute these enquiries¹. By this means, the following lists were established from January 1941 :

(1). Lists of missing in the Battle of France, classified according to units. The lists were drawn up on the grounds of applications received in Geneva, as a result of an appeal by the ICRC published in the press and broadcasted.

(2) Lists of 570,000 French prisoners in Germany, classified according to their army units.

With the help of the Auxiliary Sections, the French Section then made out 570,000 envelopes addressed to these prisoners, each of which contained :

(a) The list of the missing in the unit to which the addressee belonged ;

(b) A circular letter calling on the PW to help, by trying to recall what had become of the missing men named in the list.

(c) A sheet of writing paper for the answer, and an envelope addressed to the Agency.

These envelopes were sent off to the camps during May 1941.

Answers began to come in very soon in large numbers. From July to December 1941, no fewer than 142,707 were returned to the French Section. Some of the answers referred to several cases, and it was possible to select from amongst them 170,000 statements which were sufficiently accurate to be of practical use.

For each missing man, the number of statements averaged from one to twenty or thirty. The value of these statements varied considerably ; some were conclusive as regards facts and dates, others did not justify the drawing of conclusions, but supplied data which allowed further enquiries to be made with civil and military authorities, hospitals, etc. Some of these testimonies were accompanied by sketch plans, which

¹ See p. 108.

often showed with great accuracy the place where the missing man had fallen, or was buried.

Copies of the statements were made for the next of kin, the *Service central de l'Etat-civil militaire* in Paris, and the French Red Cross. All the statements were forwarded by the Section to these two agencies, but only those which supplied wholly reliable evidence were communicated to the relatives. When the statements were liable to cause needless pain, the Section wrote a personal letter, which softened the blow as much as possible.

Study of the 170,000 statements forwarded by the Central Agency enabled the French military authorities to clear up the circumstances in which over 30,000 men were missing¹. The number of the missing being 40,000 as was said, the cases which it was not possible to clear up were reduced to about ten thousand.

The "regimental enquiries" occupied an average of 60 workers at the French Section for over a year. This task produced some of the best results recorded at the Agency, and was one of the most interesting.

Independently of the "regimental enquiries" proper, the French Section started other enquiries, to ascertain the facts about missing service-men. This was the case in particular after the battles of Dunkirk and Narvik. The enquiries were carried out in liaison with the British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies.

* * *

During the whole period (June 1940 - November 1942) in which France was cut by the demarcation line, which was the boundary of the occupation zone, the Agency itself sorted the mail according to zones, with a view to accelerating the postal service to France. The forwarding of letters was done through different channels, according to each zone. As regards the

¹ In 23,000 of these cases, the wording of the statements enabled the facts to be clarified; in about 7,000 cases further search carried out by the French authorities on these grounds enabled conclusive evidence to be gathered.

Departments crossed by the demarcationline, directories indicated to which zone specific places belonged. Any error in forwarding entailed long delays in delivery, as the mail from abroad was not sent from one zone to another in case of mistake, but returned to the sender.

II. FROM THE BATTLE OF FRANCE IN 1940 TO THE ALLIED LANDING IN 1944

The creation of the Free French Committee in London in June 1940, following on the call made by General de Gaulle, and the enlistment of Free French Forces, were soon to place the French Section before a new situation. There were henceforth two French Governments, one in Vichy, and another in London; although in opposition, they had, or might have French nationals held prisoner in the same detaining State: Germany.

In the course of 1941, the work of the French Section in connection with the Battle of France was gradually wound up, and for reasons of convenience, it was decided to assemble in a new card-index the data and applications relating to all the operations where French forces were engaged after the armistice of June 1940.

Enquiries for Seamen

As a result of the signature of the Franco-German armistice, warships of the French Navy were interned in Great Britain and in Alexandria (Egypt). Likewise, a certain number of ships of the French merchant marine were interned by Great Britain, or took refuge in neutral ports. The relatives of many sailors of these ships applied to the Agency for news; but the applications which reached the French Section did not, of course, mention the places where the vessels were interned.

With a view to assembling all the data concerning the Navy, the merchant marine and their crews, a separate card-index was opened in the French Section. By enquiries made of Allied

or neutral authorities, and of the Committee's delegations abroad, and by various methods of counterchecking, the Section was able to collect data concerning 1,500 French ships. Mention should also be made of the voluminous correspondence between the Section and the Maritime Prefectures of Toulon and Brest.

Syrian Campaign

In June and July 1941, the campaign in Syria saw French forces engaged on both sides. Military personnel belonging to the units which had been sent out by the Vichy Government were captured by the British forces, who did not forward their names to the Agency. These men, with very few exceptions, were not considered as prisoners of war; as soon as they were taken, they asked to enlist in the French units which were being built up in the Middle East and in Great Britain. Moreover, as the British authorities in the Middle East and the French representatives in Cairo avoided giving any precise answers to the enquiries which they received about these men, the French Section in turn was practically unable to supply information to applicants. Many applications came from the "Directorate of the Levant Forces" at Arles, with which the French Section kept up a large correspondence.

The Battle of Bir-Hacheim

It was at the battle of Bir-Hacheim on June 11, 1942, that French forces under French command were first engaged in operations in North Africa. As a result of urgent steps by the ICRC, the Italians treated the French soldiers taken at this battle as PW and not as "francs-tireurs". The men were first of all assembled at Tobruk, and then conveyed to Italy. The ship carrying them, the *Nino Bixio*, was torpedoed off the Greek coast; although she did not sink, many PW, including numerous French, were drowned while attempting to swim to shore. No detailed list had been drawn up when the men embarked, and the names of the survivors were not carefully noted when they landed; the French Section was therefore at a

loss to supply information on the missing. Later, however, it succeeded in making contact with the leader of the French PW on board the vessel; when this man escaped from Italy to Switzerland in September 1943, he was able to furnish the Agency with the names of most of the missing, thus enabling news to be sent to relatives who lived in uncertainty for over a year. This is a good illustration of the value, under certain conditions, of the evidence of a qualified witness in the work of searching for the missing.

Despite repeated steps by the ICRC, the Italian authorities did not of their own accord communicate to the Agency the names of Free French PW whom they held. Individual enquiries had to be made, to which the answers were long in reaching Geneva.

Landing in North Africa and Italian Campaign

The Anglo-American landing in North Africa, which led to these territories joining the French Movement of National Liberation, involved a great increase of work for the French Section. The staff, which had been reduced to 50 after the work relating to the Battle of France had been finished, had to be increased to 80 assistants.

As a result of the landing, North Africa, which has a large French population, was entirely cut off from the home country. The French African colonies had meanwhile also joined General de Gaulle, and the French Section had to serve as an intermediary in various fields between the home country and the French territories in Africa. The Section undertook many enquiries in liaison with the French Red Cross in France, and in various parts of the French Empire in Africa.

One of the consequences of this complete severance of relations was that the General Staff of the new French Army in Africa sent to the Agency information about members of that Army who had been killed in action¹. On the basis of information thus received, the French Section prepared letters for

¹ For reasons of security, the places of death and burial were not given on these documents.

the next of kin in France. These letters were forwarded to the French Red Cross in Paris, which sent them to the addressees in a tactful manner, through its departmental committees and local branches. This work lasted throughout the Italian campaign, and its volume increased as further French units joined the Allied forces.

Political Deportees

During these military events, numbers of French citizens were deported by the authorities of occupation, and the applications about them became increasingly pressing. A separate Service was set up to deal with these cases. Since the German authorities supplied no particulars about these deportees, the Section approached the German Red Cross with individual enquiries about them. This Society had stated its readiness to receive such applications and transmit them to the German police. The German authorities never supplied Geneva with any names, so that the endeavours of the French Section, whose staff had been temporarily increased to 115, proved fruitless.

However, the ICRC succeeded in sending individual relief parcels to deportees whose addresses were known. The receipts often bore, in addition to the signature of the addressees, those of other detainees, who had seized this opportunity to make known their whereabouts. The French Section was thus able to establish lists, which it afterwards sent to the Ministry for Ex-Servicemen and War Victims in Paris.

Civilian Workers

By virtue of the agreements concluded between the German Government and the French authorities of Vichy, French citizens were enlisted in France and sent to Germany as civilian workers. Although an official agency (the *Commissariat général d'action sociale pour les Français travaillant en Allemagne*) was set up to handle all matters connected with this class of persons, a large number of civilian workers applied to Geneva with questions of all kinds. Their relatives likewise sent many

enquiries to the Agency. Since Germany had no central card-index on civilian workers, the investigations undertaken by the French Section as a result of these applications were difficult, and often unavailing.

The names and addresses of civilian workers might obviously have been taken methodically from the quantities of Civilian Messages which passed through the Agency on their way from the workers to their next of kin. But this considerable task would have seriously delayed the forwarding of the messages. The Section therefore enclosed with the messages a card of standard size, which could be filled up by the addressees and returned to Geneva, thus giving the French Section, without loss of time, the name and addresses of the workers concerned.

III. FROM THE ALLIED LANDING IN FRANCE TO THE RELEASE OF THE PW AND DEPORTEES

Liberation of French territory

The Allied landings in the summer of 1944 and the opening of a front in France led to the stoppage of all direct postal relations between the liberated French areas and the PW camps in Germany. The French Section thus received large numbers of messages addressed to PW. At the same time, the camp spokesmen sent to Geneva letters addressed to the relatives, or lists of families, from whom the prisoners were anxious to hear.

In September 1944, as soon as the Allied forces had reached the Swiss frontier, the Central Agency took steps to have mail for French PW sent through Swiss territory. Application was made in Lyons to the Directorate of PW and the French Post Office, and in Berne to the Swiss Post Office. Following on these negotiations, the direct exchange of mail was established anew, and thousands of mail-bags passed through Switzerland. The French Section was thus relieved of an exacting task, which its reduced staff could not have carried out within a reasonable space of time.

In connection with the operations of the French Forces for the liberation of France (First French Army and French

Forces of the Interior), the German authorities, despite urgent representations by the ICRC, supplied only occasional and fragmentary information about the capture of French combatants. As a matter of fact, these captures were comparatively few, since the French forces generally possessed the initiative in these operations.

Repatriation of Deportees and PW

Whilst the Allied forces liberated French territory, the delegates of the ICRC in Germany succeeded in entering certain concentration camps and organized, with Red Cross trucks, the repatriation of deportees through Swiss territory. On April 9, 1945, the first convoy of French deportees, comprising 300 women, arrived at Kreuzlingen from the camp at Ravensbrück. Their names were taken on the spot by the Agency and sent to their families.

Later, the French Section used the wireless to announce the names of PW and deportees who were repatriated through Switzerland. It arranged for these persons to fill out notification cards during the journey, and the names were read the same day over the wireless.

When deaths occurred during repatriation, the French Section was notified and at once advised the next of kin. In many cases, the relatives were notified in time and were able to be at the bedside of the dying.

The liberation of French deportees and PW by the Allied forces put an end to the work of the French Section, as far as these people were concerned, but brought into relief the cases of all those who were missing. The French Section thus continued to receive many requests for investigation.

A large part of these applications were sent to the French and Allied agencies, who were able to deal with them through their investigation commissions in Germany¹. In many cases,

¹ In particular, the Ministry of Ex-Servicemen and War Victims, the French Red Cross, the International Committee of Catholic Chaplains, and the Associations of Prisoners and Deportees.

however, the records of the French Section supplied the data for a reply, which the Section forwarded itself, thus entailing further secretarial work, well beyond the conclusion of the war.

Alsations and Lorrainers

Although the French Section had practically completed its task as regards the French in German hands, it continued to register and to handle enquiries and information relative to the Alsations and Lorrainers who had been forcibly enlisted in the Wehrmacht. Already during the war, it had dealt with cases relating to Alsations and Lorrainers, and it therefore continued, on the basis of documents received from the Detaining States, to establish lists, which were sent to the Ministry of Ex-Servicemen and War Victims in Paris.

British Section

Before surveying the work of the British Section and its evolution some features of a general nature may be noted.

The British Commonwealth comprised Great Britain, the Dominions and India, all States party to the Geneva Convention, and each having its own official Information Bureau. In addition it covered a number of territories and colonies throughout the world. The many States with which the Agency had to maintain direct contact entailed a certain complexity in the structure of the British Section.

The fact, however, that Great Britain and the Dominions were not occupied by the enemy allowed a great degree of continuity in their relations with the Agency. Moreover, the close and confident association which the official Bureaux and the National Red Cross Societies of the Commonwealth at all times maintained with Geneva, eased the task of the British Section to a very considerable degree.

Further, the remoteness of many of these countries and the slowness, or severing of postal communications often forced the Section to send the information received by telegraph. This procedure, which was an innovation in the Central Agency, formed one of the special features of the Section.

The British Section was set up on September 14, 1939, to handle cases concerning British subjects in all parts of the Commonwealth. For the sake of clearness in the following account of events which influenced the development of the Section, we must distinguish between the European and African zones of operation on the one hand, and that of the Far East on the other.

EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN ZONES OF OPERATION

During the first phase of the existence of the British Section, that is to say, from its formation until the Battle of France in 1940, it remained only a small department. The Expeditionary Force had not been in action during this period, therefore the number of PW — airmen and seamen — was very small. On the eve of the German offensive, this number amounted only to some few hundred. Information received from the German Official Bureau in Berlin¹ was at that time passed on exclusively by photostat and ordinary mail to the official bureau in London, the Prisoners of War Information Bureau, a branch of the War Office.

The real work of the Section began with the operations in Norway and the Battle of France in 1940. With the invasion of France, direct postal communication between Geneva and England was severed: after that time, on the initiative of the Section information was telegraphed to the Bureau in London, the first of these telegrams being despatched on June 18.

During the summer and autumn of 1940, the Battle of France caused a considerable flow of information to the British Section, chiefly in connection with events at Saint Valery-en-Caux, (capture of a Scottish Division) and Dunkirk. The Section was therefore forced to increase its strength, which grew from one or two to more than twenty by the end of 1940.

With the entry of Italy into the war and the ensuing African campaign (with its many fluctuations) a new factor intervened — the engagement of troops from countries of the Dominions, India and the Colonies. To the German Official Bureau was henceforth added another source of information, the "Ufficio Prigionieri di Guerra" at Rome, the official Information Bureau established by the Italian Red Cross.

¹ "Wehrmachtauskunftstelle für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgefangene" (Army Information Office for Casualties and PW) of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Army High Command) referred to in this report as "OKW".

In anticipation of future operations, the delegation of the ICRC in Cairo arranged with the British military authorities of the Middle East, during the summer of 1940, that it should have direct information regarding Italian prisoners, for transmission by cable to the Agency.

In compensation, the ICRC obtained from the Italian authorities that they should send notification by telegram of captures and deaths of British military personnel in the African theatre of war. At the request of its delegation in Cairo, and in order to enable the latter to notify the military authorities of the Middle East, this information was thenceforward transmitted by telegraph simultaneously to the Delegation and to the Official Bureau in London. The first of these telegrams to Cairo was sent on August 21, 1940.

As a result of negotiations with the official Bureaux of the various Dominions during 1941, it was decided that the Central Agency should cable direct to the Bureaux the information it received concerning the nationals of these countries.

This decision was the beginning of an intensive flow of information between the British Section and the following official Bureaux (the date of the despatch of the first cable is given in brackets) :

Canada :	Department of External Affairs, Ottawa	(July 2, 1941)
Australia :	PW Information Bureau, Melbourne	(Sept. 1, 1941)
New Zealand :	Prime Minister, Missing PW Enquiry Office, Wellington	(Sept. 10, 1941)
South Africa :	South African Red Cross, Johannesburg	(Oct. 9, 1941)
India :	Adjutant General Branches, Delhi	(Nov. 10, 1941)

Subsequently, telegrams addressed to some of these departments were sent, at their request, to their liaison office in London, which ensured their being forwarded. The technical

problems raised in the distribution of this information will be examined below.

During 1941, the campaign in Cyrenaica continued, the initiative passing in turn from one side to the other, and the Italian East African campaign was coming to a close. The outstanding event of the year was, however, the British campaign in Greece, which had its fateful ending on the embarkation beaches of Kalamata and in the mountains of Crete. The Section at that time received a great amount of information.

The delegate of the ICRC in Athens meanwhile took the initiative in obtaining from the Greek Red Cross a list of the British PW in the transit camp at Corinth, where the majority had been assembled before their departure for Germany. This work was later to prove invaluable, for the official German lists only arrived at the Agency after a long delay. In addition, the delegation of the ICRC in Greece itself succeeded in collecting a great deal of information regarding British PW in Greece and sent this to Geneva, thus lightening the work of the Section.

In 1942, the Libyan campaign followed its course of alternate advance and retreat. The most significant event in its bearing on the British Section was the major offensive of the Axis forces against Egypt in June, in the course of which many units were captured. In spite of the important part taken by the Africa Corps in this campaign, these PW were taken in charge by the Italians, and later transferred to Italy. In accordance with the arrangements mentioned above, their names were telegraphed by the "Ufficio Prigionieri" during the summer and autumn of 1942. This flow of information contributed greatly to the development of the British Section into one of considerable importance; at the end of 1942, its strength had already increased to close on 100 persons.

By reason of the military operations in Africa, and in consequence of circumstances described below, the British Section from the end of 1941 until September 1943, when Italy capitulated, was primarily concerned with the problem of its relations with the Italian authorities.

Although the telegraphic notification of capture by the Italian Official Bureau did as a rule operate normally, the

notice of transfers to permanent camps was most unsatisfactory. This was due to the notorious inadequacy of the information given by the Italian military authorities to the Bureau, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts it made. In a great number of cases, it was only after considerable delay or insistent requests that the British Section was informed of the prisoners' permanent camps.

During the whole period, the frequent omissions in notifying deaths and the delay in the receipt of hospital returns were likewise the cause of considerable difficulties to the Section. These difficulties were all the more appreciable, since prisoners in Italian camps were, until April 1943, unable to send capture cards. It is true that from this date the Italian authorities introduced a system of cards called "initial capture cards". These were at once established in triplicate; one copy was sent by post to the man's relatives, the second to the Agency and the third kept by the Ufficio.

This interesting innovation unfortunately came too late to be of any real value.

Although the Allied landing in North Africa in November 1942 had no immediate effect on the British Section, the event was, nevertheless, of importance in the reactions which it was to bring about. From this date onwards, in fact, the Allies were to keep the initiative in Africa.

Henceforth, the Axis forces no longer captured large numbers of British troops. In fact, it has been confirmed that almost three-quarters of those killed, missing or taken prisoner, and whose cases were investigated by the Section, were connected with operations before this date.

The fall of the Fascist regime and the armistice signed by the Italian Government during the summer of 1943 had important repercussions on the British Section.

As a consequence of these events, the German Government sought to seize the British PW in Italian camps with all speed. The relative slowness of the Allied advance during the autumn of 1943, made it possible to carry out this plan and the majority of these PW, many after only a brief spell of liberty, fell into German hands. A certain number, however, were able to reach

the Allied lines, whilst about 6,000 succeeded in crossing into Switzerland, where they were interned.

In these conditions, Italy ceased to exist as a Detaining Power, and from this time the Ufficio dealt only with occasional cases relating to Allied PW.

The first step of the German authorities was to transfer all recaptured PW to Germany. This transfer created special difficulties for the British Section with regard to PW mail.

Information relating to the new camps only came through to the Central Agency by degrees and often after long delay. This fact gave rise to an accumulation of correspondence at the Agency itself, and at the Swiss and British post offices. On account of this general situation, the British Section on September 10, 1943, decided to hold up all mail intended for Italy, and to file the letters whilst awaiting particulars which would enable them to be forwarded.

The postal authorities in London and Switzerland, after consulting Geneva, sent to the Central Agency all correspondence addressed to prisoners in the former Italian camps, and this was also filed to await further particulars.

During the following months, the Section, acting on information received from Germany, re-addressed letters and cards and sent them on their way; more than 800,000 were thus dispatched. The whole staff of the Section were at times pressed into service to complete this task; the Auxiliary Sections and a number of British subjects interned in Switzerland also lent their aid.

Besides this work, the British Section by careful checking helped in the re-addressing of more than 150,000 parcels, held up at the post office in Basle, which were intended for the men who had previously been in PW camps in Italy.

No outstanding event in connection with the European zone of operations was of significance in the work of the British Section at the end of 1943 and during the first months of 1944. The situation brought about by the transfer of prisoners from Italy to Germany righted itself by degrees, with the receipt of information giving the men's addresses in the new camps. The

capture cards sent by the prisoners, and the remarkably well-prepared lists drawn up by camp leaders in most of the camps, contributed to a large extent to this return to the normal routine. These documents formed at this time one of the main sources of information for the Section, and were all the more appreciated because, in the circumstances, the official German information was often subject to long delay.

Reference should be made here to the air operations, which were of primary importance in the conduct of the war by the Commonwealth and the United States, and for that reason, had widespread repercussions on the British Section. In contrast to the course of land operations, British air warfare against Germany gained importance and developed steadily since 1942. Information regarding British airmen, who had fallen, either dead or as PW, into enemy hands was regularly received.

On the basis of reciprocity, which was adhered to by the British authorities, the German official Bureau telegraphed the names of these airmen throughout the war, as it did in the case of PW who died in captivity. These telegrams were at once forwarded by the British Section, and this procedure ensured a priority transmission for the initial notifications regarding airmen. In favourable conditions, the official Bureaux of the Commonwealth were thus able to receive information in less than a week.

The last phase of activity of the British Section in relation to the European zone of operations began with the Allied landing in France of June 1944. Although, as strategy, it was to introduce events so great and so decisive, the landing had little or no direct effect on the work of the Section. The Allied armies, who continued to hold the initiative, were no longer subject to great losses by casualties or prisoners. It was in other fields that the effects on the British Section of this last phase of the war in Europe were apparent, and chiefly in that of postal communications.

In the first place, all postal traffic was suspended on the eve of major offensives as a security measure. In the second, the transport of mail became precarious, or was even quite

often suspended by the destruction done to buildings, railways, bridges, etc. In addition, the advance of the Allied armies from East and West towards the heart of Germany had the consequence of a general and often disorganized withdrawal of Allied PW camps towards the Central and Southern regions of the country. On this account, an increasing number of camps were no longer within reach, and correspondence addressed to them had to be held at Geneva.

The British Section, owing to these circumstances, only received delayed and often contradictory information on the location of the camps, and its work thus became extremely complicated. At this time the correspondence with the camps was the chief concern of the Section, as communication with the German official Bureau became more and more precarious. It should, however, be noted that this Bureau did its utmost until the end to send information relating to captures, deaths and transfers.

During the period of operations immediately preceding the capitulation of the German forces, the British Section, in spite of the suspension of the postal service between Switzerland and Germany, made every attempt to keep in contact with the PW, in an effort to send their mail at all costs and to get from them news for their relatives. It was able to do so only by making use of the "block trains" and fleets of motor-trucks organized by the ICRC itself for conveying food supplies to the camps.

The release and repatriation of the PW, which began with the advance of the Allied armies, continued, and was soon completed after the end of hostilities. Thus, the sudden ending of a situation which had been so alarming for these men only a short while before, coupled with the fact that the British Section, unlike other departments, was not called upon to deal with post-war problems, explains why its activities decreased so rapidly after the cessation of hostilities.

FAR EAST THEATRE OF WAR

The sudden entry of Japan into the war on December 7, 1941, soon confronted the British Section with new problems. During the first months of war in the Far East, the initial and local superiority of the Japanese forces brought about a series of reverses for the Allies. Two of these had considerable repercussions on the Section: the surrender of Hong-Kong on December 26, 1941, and that of Singapore on February 15, 1942. It was during these two operations that the greater part of the men were captured who were to be the concern of the Far East Service, set up by the British Section to deal with all cases relating to the war in the Far East. The situation soon became stabilized, and by the summer of 1942 the Allies regained the initiative, which they were to keep until Japan capitulated on August 10, 1945.

The entry of Japan into the war meant for the British Section dealings with yet a third official Bureau: the "Huryojohokioku" or Prisoners' Information Bureau of the Japanese Ministry for War. The first communication was received on February 17, 1942. It is true that the Section had already received some information from the Japanese Red Cross, as well as from the Swiss Legation and the delegation of the ICRC at Tokyo.

Owing to the difficulty in communicating with Japan during the war, the wireless telegraph was from the outset the only means of communication used by the official Bureau of that country for transmitting information on PW.

The transmission of telegrams received from the Bureau, whilst fairly regular, was slow, and at the end of hostilities a considerable number of prisoners and of deaths in the camps had not yet been notified. Moreover, it was only through the notification of their transfer to other camps that the capture of a great number of PW came to the knowledge of the Section.

A particularly anxious problem was that of PW whose country of origin was India. They were for the most part Sikhs and Gurkhas, who have always formed a large proportion of the troops recruited in India by Great Britain. The Japanese

authorities did not rate these men as enemies because, in their view, they belonged to the "common sphere of interest of Greater East Asia", and therefore in no way considered themselves bound to list and notify them. These men, therefore, had to be treated as missing, and the British Section, much against its will, found it therefore impossible to take action on the long lists of applications coming in from India.

The European and African theatres of war raised a certain number of problems which, although awkward, were well-defined, and rather of a technical nature, whereas the Far East never ceased to constitute a problem in itself for the British Section. This state of affairs may be explained by the peculiar views of Asiatic peoples concerning the human being and captivity in war¹. This point of view leads them to accord little importance to the individual, and hence to often disregard the rights of the prisoner : they are equally little concerned with the personal rights of men of their own race. Moreover, if one considers the disgrace attached in the mind of a Japanese to the idea of surrender to the enemy, the deplorable situation of Allied prisoners in Japanese hands may be understood, as may the lack of information received concerning them, the poor result of enquiries to Japanese bureaux, and the isolation of these men from their relatives.

This serious situation was aggravated by the fact that the ICRC could have no personal contact with its delegates in the Far East, and by the refusal of the Japanese Military Authorities to allow delegates to communicate with the PW representatives in the camps.

It will be understood, therefore, with what relief a proposal of the Japanese Government in 1944 was received : this was for the exchange of messages through the Central Agency, between PW and civilian internees in Japanese hands and their relatives, by means of one telegram a year for each person concerned². Unfortunately, the system did not work satisfactorily except in the direction from next of kin to PW ;

¹ See Vol. I, "Conflict in the Far East",

² For further details see p. 61.

in the other direction, which was of the greater interest, only a couple of thousand messages were received from Japan and forwarded to the relatives concerned.

During the war in the Far East, the large number of civilian internees in Japan, China and other areas under Japanese administration held an important place in the concern and activity of the Far East Service of the British Section. In addition to the cabled lists received from the Japanese Bureaux in regard to them, this Service had to deal with many Civilian Messages, which passed through Geneva and which were the only link of communication between the internees and their relatives, since these were not able to use the PW mail. These messages were handed by the National Section, instead of the Civilian Message Section, because they formed an invaluable source of information.

The Far East Service also acted as intermediary in the numerous enquiries set on foot at the request of relatives, in behalf of civilians domiciled or interned in the Far East. As the majority of these were in China, it fell to the delegates in that country to carry out these investigations, a task usually involving difficult and laborious work.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE BRITISH SECTION

Telegraphic Communications

As already mentioned, the British Section made frequent use of the telegraph in communicating information received from the Detaining Powers to the various official Bureaux of the Commonwealth.

In order to save time in checking at the Bureaux and to keep their expenditure on cables as low as possible, the British Section, as the mass of data increased, was led to work out a particular scheme for the drafting of its telegrams. This method, as will be demonstrated, differed from that of the other National Sections (with the exception of the American Section).

Information received by the Section was divided in two categories as follows :

1. — Information (for instance, telegrams received from German authorities regarding airmen) which appeared to be notifications of capture. These were telegraphed without the corresponding documents being checked in the index, and the making out and filing of cards was only done later.

2. — Information (for instance, the lists received from camp leaders in Germany) which appeared to be supplementary details, and which could not be telegraphed direct without running the risk of making serious mistakes in the information sent to official Bureaux ¹, or of costly repetitions. These particulars were first entered on cards, which were checked in the index. The filing clerks then decided, on the basis of their research, whether the communication should be sent, or not.

Two instances might occur — either it was considered that the information was premature or already known, when it was not telegraphed and the card was simply filed, or it appeared to be new and was telegraphed ; in this case the card (or batch) was taken from the index and replaced by a slip showing the reason for its removal.

After being sorted according to the prisoner's country of origin, the cards were collected every day for the drafting of telegrams to the different official Bureaux. Each bore concise references, giving the date and nature of the communications sent and enabling these to be checked at any given time.

One cannot exaggerate the decisive part played by the filing staff in the procedure described. This personnel had in fact the responsibility, which was only part of their duties in the British Section, of effectively carrying out the system of communicating information by telegraph, which had been adopted by understanding with the various countries in the Commonwealth.

The staff had therefore to be thoroughly familiar, not only with the various filing rules for the card-index, but also with

¹ For instance, the danger of reporting, on the basis of out-of-date information, the camp locality of a prisoner who had since died, and whose death had been the subject of a communication.

the particular arrangements made with each separate official Bureau for telegraphic communications.

Such was the method used in the British Section for telegraphing information. Although it complicated the work of the Section and appeared to slow down the sending of information, it was however the only scheme which made possible the transmission of large masses of information, in a rational way.

Mention should here be made of the enquiries opened by the Section, at the request of the British authorities, to obtain statements from witnesses with regard to missing British army personnel and upon which more detailed information is given in the first part of this volume (page 50).

German Section

The German Section was formed on September 14, 1939, the date on which the Polish, French and British Sections were also organized. It began like most of the National Sections of the Central Agency, in a small way ; it was to become the largest of them, both in respect of the number of cases that went through its hands and the size of its staff. As matters turned out, during the last period of its existence the major part of the Agency's activities came to be concentrated in this Section.

There are two main periods in the work of the German Section : the first was during the war, and the second after it had ended.

During the war, the Section operated more or less normally. After the war, however, the disappearance of the German Government and of any body qualified to serve as a central official Bureau had the effect for the Agency of creating entirely new conditions in its work which were unexampled in the annals of the ICRC.

I. WAR PERIOD

This was the period when Germany was at war with many countries. That fact had far-reaching effects on the Section and gave rise to a number of technical problems. The various countries at war with Germany all had different methods for sending information on prisoners and other victims of the war : the German Section, in greater degree than the other national Sections, had thus difficulty in settling on its working methods. There was great variety in the sources of information, and that

meant that there was equal diversity in the nature and form of the documents.

The main obstacle encountered by the German Section from 1941 throughout its history was, however, the complete lack of information regarding the Eastern front. The repeated endeavours made by the ICRC to find a remedy for this serious gap are described in detail in Vol. I of the present Report. This absence of information meant that there were gaps in the index, and this proved a great handicap to the Section and made complete co-ordination of its work very difficult.

The methodical and detailed work of German organizations and the discipline of the people were, on the other hand, helpful to the Section. Formal instructions were given to the German public to put all their enquiries about PW or relatives through the intermediary of the German official Bureau¹ and the German Red Cross². These organizations sorted the enquiries and only sent on to the Central Agency those which raised any problem. The German Section was in this way relieved of much routine work, done in Germany, and was freed to that extent for more complex duties.

Such were the main features of the German Section during the war. The effect of military events on it will now be examined.

Campaigns in Poland and in Norway.
First Campaign in the West
(1939-1940)

The first phase of the war did not involve the German Section in much work. The few German prisoners taken were soon released. The main business of the Section was the transmission of information concerning deaths of members of the forces, and in opening enquiries on missing men. The search for information on men who had disappeared in northern Norway was often difficult to carry out.

¹ "Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgefangene" of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (usually called "OKW").

² Usually called "DRK".

Air and Naval War against Great Britain (1940-1941)

Like most air and naval actions in the recent war, these operations were remarkable for the fact that they engaged a relatively small number of men. The numbers were few, it is true, but the crews were picked men whose fate was closely followed in Germany. Another feature was the very high proportion of missing and, above all, of killed.

These facts are sufficient explanation why the names of dead or captured enemy airmen and sailors were telegraphed by both Germany and Great Britain. Thus the British official Bureau¹ announced death or capture of German airmen and sailors by telegraph to the Central Agency. Immediately these telegrams were received by the German Section, the information was forwarded by telegram to the Berlin official Bureau.

Many of the great number of enquiries undertaken by the German Section were often complicated by the fact that when planes were shot down, it was difficult and sometimes impossible to identify bodies burned or cast up by the sea.

At this time the Section made many collective enquiries on plane or submarine crews, for example, and questioned eyewitnesses. On the whole, these efforts were fruitful.

Yugoslav and Greek Campaign (1941)

The course of this campaign was so swift that no call was made on the work of the German Section until the final phase, when Crete fell to the forces of the Wehrmacht. It will be remembered that it was on this island that there was bitter fighting between German parachutists and the Australian and New Zealand troops. After these battles the Section received some 3,000 enquiries about missing parachute troops.

When the island was evacuated, the British forces took with them to Egypt some hundreds of PW whose names were telegraphed by the Middle East official Bureau.

¹ Prisoners of War Information Bureau (PWIB) of the War Office.

The Campaign in Africa (1940-1943)

The first German action on African soil was in the Ethiopian campaign in 1940-1941, when many German volunteers served in the Italian army. Some of these volunteers were German settlers living in Italian East Africa, and others were seamen and passengers on vessels who had managed to reach the Italian port of Massawa, on the Red Sea. Those among them who were captured in battle were considered by the British as PW and so reported ; the others were arrested and were classed as civilian internees when the campaign came to an end. Among these the former members of ships' crews were interned in separate camps for merchant seamen. These cases gave rise to involved and protracted enquiries. Thanks to information sought from witnesses, for the most part, it was possible to trace a large number of the men ¹.

The German forces came into action in the Libya campaign in the spring of 1941, when the Axis Powers first went on to the offensive. It was, however, in the second offensive, in June, 1942, that the "Afrika Korps" was engaged in force. This picked corps was followed with such interest in Germany that it might be said every missing man was the object of an individual enquiry to the Central Agency. Desert war conditions made search extremely difficult : bodies quickly became buried by the sand and generally, once the action was over, troops did not again pass over the ground outside the tracks. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that enquiries carried out by the Section did not, in the main, yield results.

The second battle of El-Alamein (Oct. 23 to Nov. 4, 1942) saw the beginning of the German reverses in the Mediterranean theatre and in the west. On that date too, the strategy of Germany turned, in the main, from the offensive to the defensive. This turn of the tide in the war became still more apparent when the Allies landed in French North Africa on November 8, 1942.

These events were the beginning of a period of great activity

¹ The "snow ball" method, already mentioned in Part I of this Report (see p. 51) yielded very conclusive results, particularly in regard to men killed in battle.

for the Section. Capture cards arrived in thousands as well as notifications of deaths and of captures from the enemy official Bureaux ; this was the inevitable result of military reverses. There was also a big increase in the number of enquiries from Germany as to the fate of the missing. These facts accounted for the rapid growth of the German Section. In May 1943, its staff consisted of nineteen persons ; at the end of the same year, it had risen to fifty-six.

The battle of El-Alamein was followed by the hard-fought retreat of the " Afrika-Korps " through Libya, the defensive battles of Tunisia and, finally, the capitulation at the beginning of May 1943, of some 150,000 men in the Tunis sector and the Cape Bon peninsula.

Up to the time of the campaign in Tunisia, the German Section had to deal, for the most part, with only one group of Detaining Powers, Great Britain and the Dominions. The Commonwealth sent its information to the Central Agency by way of the London and Middle East ¹ official Bureaux. Later, however, the Section had to consider two more Powers : the United States and Free France. The first telegram from the American Official Bureau ² with names from the Tunisian front was received in April 1943.

Most of the PW captured during the last phases of the fighting in Tunisia were taken by the United States, the remainder by the Free French. Those in American hands were removed from transit camps in North Africa to the United States ; those captured by the French remained in Africa. Men taken previously by the British Eighth Army and announced by the Middle East official Bureau were, generally speaking, sent to Great Britain and to Canada.

From June, 1943, and up till January, 1944, the Section had to cope with a stream of telegrams from the Washington official Bureau, announcing the arrival in camps in America

¹ Prisoners of War Information Bureau, 2nd Echelon (Middle East Headquarters) in Heliopolis (Cairo), entrusted with all communications concerning PW and deceased in the Middle East.

² Prisoner of War Information Bureau, Office of the Provost Marshal General of the United States War Department, Washington.

of PW taken in the latter part of the campaign in Tunisia.

Notifications of prisoners in French hands were sent on individual cards by the French official Bureau in Algiers ¹.

The slowness of postal communications between countries overseas and Geneva during the war explains why, up till 1944, the British Commonwealth and the United States usually had recourse to telegrams for communicating their information to the Central Agency. At the close of January 1944, however, in view of the considerable expense entailed, the German official Bureau asked that transmission by telegram be given up, and that in future these communications be made by means of lists, identity cards and microfilms.

It should also be mentioned, in connection with the war in Africa, that as the German Authorities had not recognized Free France, the German Section was obliged to take over certain activities previously carried out by the Protecting Power.

Italian Campaign (1943-1945)

This campaign opened on July 10, 1943, by the Allied landing in Sicily and ended on May 2, 1945, by the capitulation of the German forces in the north of Italy. It will be remembered for some violent battles, but generally speaking it was a slow war of movement interrupted by two periods when the front was stabilized: one was during the 1943-1944 winter before Cassino, and the other during the following winter in the Ligurian Apennines and before Bologna, on the "Gothic Line".

With the early days of the Italian campaign, there arrived a large number of notifications of deaths sent to the German Section. The percentage of unknown was high and entailed attempts to establish identity, which were impeded by the frequent shifting of the Allied military organs to whom application for information had to be made. Later, capture cards and information on PW also flowed into the Section.

After the temporary stabilization of the front in the winter of 1943-1944, there began a war of position, similar to that of

¹ *Direction du Service des prisonniers de guerre en Afrique du Nord.*

1914-1918. The German Section then received a very large number of requests for enquiries to be made, and it did its best to satisfy them. The Section had no indication as to which Power held a particular PW of whom details were requested; application was therefore made simultaneously to the military bureaux of each of the three Allied armies in Italy, through the intermediary of the Committee's Delegations in Algiers, and later in Naples.

During the first part of this campaign PW taken by the Allies did not remain in Italy, but were transferred to North Africa, Egypt, the British Commonwealth countries or to the United States. Notifications were therefore sent according to circumstances, by the American official Bureau in Algiers, the London official Bureau, or the official Bureau of the Middle East. During 1944, however, regular PW camps were set up by the Allied forces in Italy itself, and the Central Agency there after received notifications from the Information Bureau and from the Peninsular Base Section.

In respect of the Italian campaign, information furnished by the American forces was in the form of camp lists or rosters; the British and French forces, for their part, made use of individual forms, called identity cards.

*Liberation of France,
Invasion of Germany and Allied Air Offensive
(1944-1945)*

With the Allied landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944, and later in the South of France on August 15, began the final phase of the war in Europe. An almost overwhelming amount of work then devolved on the German Section. From the end of the summer, capture cards began to arrive from thousands of PW who had fallen into Allied hands within a few months, either during the Battle of Normandy, or during the rapid advance of the Allied armies through France and Belgium. The Section, in view of this ever increasing influx of notifications, had to take on many more assistants: the staff rose from

61 members at the close of June, 1944, to 93 in December and 169 in June, 1945.

The vast significance of events and their rapid sequence obliged the Section to devote its energies henceforth almost exclusively to the most urgent work: communication to the German official Bureau of the great volume of information sent in by Allied military offices on those who had died and on PW, and transmission to enquirers of relevant details from the mass of information yielded by "tallies" in the card-index. It was no longer possible to respond so readily to requests for enquiries as formerly, and a decision had to be made to reply only to those which had an exceptional claim to attention.

During the autumn of 1944, the mass of information received was greater than ever, and the rate at which it came in, far from slackening, gathered speed throughout 1945. The collective notifications relating to the campaign in France were immediately followed by those covering the various phases of the advance into Germany, during which steadily increasing numbers of men were taken prisoner.

This great press of work, even though additional help was given by the Auxiliary Sections in various towns in Switzerland, placed the German Section and the general technical sections of the Central Agency (in particular the Lists and Photostat Sections) in a difficult position. On the one hand, recruitment of fresh staff could not be assured, and on the other, the Agency's premises and equipment had now practically reached their limit. In these circumstances, increasing delay in giving attention to the hundreds of thousands of capture cards and documents coming in from all sides was inevitable.

During the period of the war in Europe between the landing in France and the German capitulation, information reached the Agency by various means. Notifications from American sources were sent in the form of microfilms by the Information Bureau attached to the Command for the European theatre of operations, which was first set up in England and later in France. Details from British sources, consisting of individual identity cards of PW and of lists of deceased, came from the London official Bureau. Information from French sources

came at first direct from various regional military authorities (F.F.I., etc.). It was only after several months that a central official Bureau began to operate in Paris¹ and attended to these communications. The notifications took the form of individual cards, of which the first arrived in Geneva in August, 1945.

The destruction in Germany by the Allied air offensive then seriously complicated the work of the Section. A large part of the population (which it was admitted finally, reached a sixth of the whole) had to move as a result of the raids. Partial destruction and the frequent moving of offices entrusted with collection of information supplied by the Central Agency, and finally, the loss of countless mail bags in bombed trains, all helped to increase the uncertainty felt in Geneva, since there was no means of ascertaining what proportion of the German Section's communications reached their destination.

In the course of the final stages of the war, when the administrative machinery in Germany was completely dislocated, these difficulties were still further aggravated, and the Agency considered it advisable to stop transmitting information, which was henceforth held back in Geneva. The last communication to the German official Bureau left Geneva on April 30, 1945.

During the post-war period, examined further on, the Central Agency was called upon, in several respects, to serve in the place of the eliminated German official Bureau, until it could be reconstituted.

Eastern Front

No official information respecting the Eastern front reached the Agency²; even so, the German Section received numerous enquiries as to the men who had served on that front, especially after the battle of Stalingrad. Various unsuccessful attempts were made to obtain information by means of enquiries in the U.S.S.R. In these circumstances, it was not possible to

¹ This was attached to the *Direction générale des prisonniers de guerre* of the Ministry of War.

² See p. 158 and Vol. I.

transmit to Germany more than a very small amount of information received now and then ¹, and a few post-card messages to relatives which reached the Agency via Ankara ; the PW in certain Soviet camps had been allowed, towards the end of 1942, to send news to their families by such cards.

In South Eastern Europe, however, the situation was rather different when Rumania and Bulgaria went over to the Allied camp, and when Yugoslavia and Greece succeeded in liberating themselves. Rumania and Bulgaria at first sent the Agency a few lists of PW, but all endeavours to obtain full information were in vain, as these men were subsequently handed over to the Soviet authorities. In Greece and in Albania, the number of enquiries opened by the Section was small, since only a few Germans had been captured or had died whilst in enemy hands. These enquiries were most difficult, in view of the circumstances in which these men had disappeared. The names of PW detained in Yugoslavia could be obtained only after the armistice. The situation of these men, who had been cut off from their relatives even long before their capture, was a matter of much concern to the Section, and great efforts were made to restore the contacts for them.

Towards the end of the war, Poland and Czechoslovakia also became Detaining Powers of German PW ; the Section thus received, in time, a great deal of information from these countries.

Transfers of Prisoners

Before this survey of the progress of military operations and their effect on the German Section is finished, a few words must be said with regard to another factor which had an important bearing on the work of the Section, namely, the transfers of German PW from one country to another, and especially from one continent to another.

¹ For example, names of PW collected on leaflets dropped by Soviet airmen, or evidence furnished by PW who had escaped, on comrades in captivity.

Transfers of PW within a country, or within a particular territory did not throw much additional work on the Section ¹, because the regional or national postal service permitted contact to be kept with PW without undue delay. On the other hand, transfers on a big scale from one country or continent to another caused much difficulty. These transfers interrupted prisoners' mail, often over many months ; the stream of letters reaching the Section clearly reflected the anxiety of relatives and the growing despondency of the men.

It has to be borne in mind — and this is only one example — that certain PW, captured in Libya, placed in camps in Egypt, later shipped across the Indian Ocean and interned temporarily in South Africa, were again embarked and carried across the Atlantic to their final destination, Canada. Every conceivable endeavour was made to obtain information and to forward it to the persons concerned without excessive delay, but at the price of incredible effort. Very often, all trace was lost of certain of these men as, at the last moment, though on the embarkation lists, they were unable to set out on account of their poor state of health. Others were put into hospital *en route* without the Agency being advised ; others again, escaped or died before the arrival of convoys at their destination.

These transfers also had the serious effect of almost completely putting an end to the method of enquiry by evidence systematically pursued by the Section : this was due to the difficulty of reaching the majority of witnesses in time.

Civilian Internees

Before the war, there were large German colonies in many countries. In time, most of these countries came to be in a state of war with Germany, or at any rate broke off diplomatic relations with her ; this led to the internment of a great many

¹ Except during the very last months of the war and the postwar period in France, when some of the PW were dispersed in large numbers of small labour detachments, and moved elsewhere when the work was finished.

German nationals. Official lists of civilian internees began to reach the Agency in large numbers. These lists were transmitted to the competent German offices, and the Section found that it had to extend its enquiries to the whole world. A considerable number of enquiries were opened, in particular in the United States, Great Britain, India, Australia and South Africa, countries which had particularly large contingents of German civilian internees. In respect of Europe, the Section was called upon towards the end of the war to deal with several thousand enquiries on German nationals in Rumania, and was able to transmit some 2,000 telegraphic messages from internees before their transfer to Russia.

It often happened that civilians were interned, then released, only to be interned again ; their exact status could be ascertained only after several protracted enquiries. Further, it was sometimes difficult to draw a distinction between civilian internees and common law prisoners. In all these instances, searches, enquiries as to health, forwarding of mail, transmission of documents, and all other kinds of service encountered serious obstacles.

The object of the enquiries made by the Section varied as much as the circumstances of the internees, some of whom had lived apart from their relatives for many years ; their living conditions, especially in tropical countries, were sometimes far from what was customary. Further, certain areas, difficult enough to reach in time of peace, became almost inaccessible when means of communication were wanting and there were no offices to serve as intermediaries.

Transfers of civilian internees from one continent to another were less frequent than of members of the forces. They nevertheless took place. Thus, men interned in the Dutch Indies were taken to British India during the Japanese advance, but the women and children, left where they were, were later taken to Japan and to Manchuria by the Japanese army. It devolved on the Section to establish contact between members of families separated in this way, and it was found possible to send their mail from Japan by way of the Trans-Siberian railway, Tiflis and Ankara to Geneva, whence it was forwarded to India via Cairo

A feature of the problem was that certain civilian internees hesitated to make themselves known. As adversaries of the Hitler régime, they feared for their relatives. Similarly, some of them framed their requests for news of relatives who had remained in Germany, with the utmost caution. We need only think in this connection, of the situation of German nationals who had served in the French Foreign Legion. This all entailed, obviously, particular problems for the Section.

Cases concerning German or stateless Jews were first assembled in a self-contained section for Sundry Civilian Internees (CID = *Civils internés divers*) ; but later, when it became increasingly difficult to distinguish these particular civilians from others in the absence of adequate indications, they were included in the German Section's card-index.

Civilian internees and their relatives required from the German Section not only much labour of varied kinds, but also involved it in great moral responsibility.

* * *

The following is a summary of technical details of the work of the Section during the period of the war.

Information

Until 1943 the British Commonwealth, then the only group of Detaining Powers which concerned the Section, supplied information that was in every respect precise and complete, and in a great variety of forms. This information related to persons who were comparatively few in number, and as it arrived punctually at regular intervals, the Agency was able to send the information to the responsible German organizations and to give satisfaction to applicants within a reasonable time.

After the capitulation of the Axis army in Tunisia and the large transfers of PW which followed, the situation was wholly different ; transmission of information then became impeded by many obstacles. For instance, details of men interned in the United States were sent in cables of unusual length and the

percentage of mutilated names was very high¹. Further, capture cards, brought over by the Committee's ships in the absence of other means of transport, reached Geneva only after considerable delay. Very often, in these circumstances, it was no longer possible within a reasonable time to reassure relatives who, owing to the irregular working of the mail service for PW, were anxiously awaiting news.

These facts led the German Section to encourage by all possible means the use by PW and their relatives of the Express Message² for their communications. These messages came through Geneva at the rate of several thousand per month.

The pressure of work was however, only relieved by the use of microfilms. By such means, lists of over 2,000 names and home addresses of PW in an extremely small space could be sent by air. In the great majority of cases they gave enough details to make identification possible. The rectangular negatives of which the film was made up, each contained the names of some fifteen men and could be enlarged at the rate of sixty an hour, i. e. 900 names. They were a very serviceable substitute for cables which, up to that time, had been used as a means of transmission.

There was a fresh problem when part of France was liberated by the F.F.I. These forces were obviously hardly equipped to organized an official information service, and the German Section received a vast amount of miscellaneous data transmitted by local branches of the French Red Cross, by priests and pastors and by members of the public. It frequently even received anonymous notes. This information was used only with the greatest caution, particularly in the matter of notifications of deaths.

Difficulties of another kind arose from the fact that lists of PW contained a high percentage of non-Germans, or of men

¹ Mutilated names came to between 6 and 20 per cent. These cables contained from seven to eight thousand words each on an average ; the one of record length, received on December 27, 1943, and the longest cable which ever reached the ICRC, consisted of 335 pages (21,590 words) and gave notification of 2,341 prisoners.

² See p. 62.

of doubtful nationality enlisted in the Wehrmacht. The Section found itself faced with a number of very awkward problems, too extensive to give in detail here. At all events, the German Section always handled "mixed" documents (relative to men of different nationalities) with great care and discretion.

Applications

Throughout the war applications came from three different sources.

(1). The German authorities, that is, the High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, or O.K.W.) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (*Auswärtiges Amt*).

The O.K.W. submitted requests almost exclusively for information on missing members of the forces. To meet certain legal requirements, it asked that individual enquiries should be made in respect of each case. The O.K.W. further often proposed an enquiry by evidence and indicated which men should be questioned. The Foreign Office sent the Agency, by the intermediary of German diplomatic representatives, requests for enquiries mainly concerning persons of rank or position.

(2). *The German Red Cross*. This organization sent requests for enquiries concerning civilians or civilian internees, on the state of health of certain PW, the location and upkeep of graves, and other details, and finally, urgent communications to be telegraphed to PW, and complaints bearing on the working of PW mail. It also sent in requests for enquiries on members of the forces missing on the Eastern front.

(3). *Private persons*. According to the rules, relatives resident in Germany were supposed to apply to the O.K.W. or to the German Red Cross, on whom it devolved to sift these enquiries and to transmit only those to the ICRC which were judged to need the Committee's especial help. As the number of losses increased, however, and anxiety took hold of an increasing number of the public, it became more difficult to insist on this restriction. The Section then received a growing number of

applications from relatives, through members of the same family and friends passing through or living in Switzerland, from international organizations or from National Red Cross Societies. Many letters even came direct from Germany, though they had been opened by the censor.

* * *

To get a clear picture of the means of action available to the German Section during the war period, it must be remembered that PW and civilian internees were for the most part detained in countries at a great distance from Geneva, while the relatives, and public and private organizations receiving information from the ICRC were, generally speaking, in Germany or in a neutral country, that is to say, near Geneva. This meant that, up to the time of the collapse of the Reich, postal communications being practically normal, it was possible to send information available at Geneva fairly quickly to the persons concerned in Germany. Direct despatch of documents (photostats) and letters was thus the rule, and information by telegraph the exception. On the contrary, messages for transmission to PW and internees were often a long time in transit, as great distances, uncertain means of transport and censorship all contributed to hinder and delay communications. Therefore, it was often necessary to fall back on telegrams or express messages.

Up to 1944 and as long as most enquiries were made by official organizations (O.K.W. and German Red Cross), the German Section was able to organize and maintain a full service of individual enquiries. The O.K.W. forwarded requests only after careful scrutiny and when the date a man was reported missing made it reasonable to presume that his name was unlikely to appear in official lists received from Geneva by the High Command. Notwithstanding the fairly large number of these enquiries, the card-index yielded only a relatively small number of "tallies". Enquiries opened by the Section were generally well received by the offices and persons to whom they were addressed. These were, according to cases, the official Bureaux or the National Red Cross Societies of the enemy

States; frequently too, application was made to the delegates of the ICRC and to the PW themselves, who were asked to furnish evidence.

Unfortunately, from the summer of 1944 the developments of the war steadily reduced the Section's field of action. With the increase in number of prisoners and of deaths, most enquiries took the form of private letters, and there was a growing tendency for urgent appeals to arrive much in advance of the receipt of the required information by the Section. Further, the main official Bureaux of the enemy States declared, one after the other, that they were unable, for lack of time, to attend to requests for individual enquiries, or that they could deal with them only at the cost of disturbing the regular transmission of routine information. In these circumstances the Section had to cut down the number of its enquiries. Obviously, the increase in requests for enquiries resulted in an appreciable increase in the responses yielded by the index and that, in turn, put an additional strain on the correspondence services.

During the second period of the Section's work its scope was to be even further limited.

II. POST-WAR PERIOD

With the armistice of May 7, 1945, Germany entered into a far more troubled period than that experienced during the last phase of the war. The surrender of the German army, the capture of several million men by the Allied forces, the collapse of the Military High Command and the Government, together with the loss of political sovereignty and territorial integrity created in Germany an unprecedented situation, whereby the Central Agency was faced with extreme difficulties.

The fact that there were no longer in Germany any national agencies with whom to co-operate rendered the Agency's task most uncertain. The first phase of the post-war period was indeed a critical time of transition for the German Section; the complete suspension of postal communication, added to the

destruction of roads and railways, still further complicated its task.

It was only after several months that this situation improved in some degree, and that a slow adjustment to the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the defeat and quadripartite occupation of German territory, began to take shape. The ICRC did its utmost to encourage this progress. First, it endeavoured to make up for the fact that national German bodies had ceased to exist by setting up in that country a network of delegations, more especially fitted for their new tasks by the drafting in of experts from the Agency. Later, the Committee encouraged the setting up of a German organization which, under the control of the occupying Powers, was able to assume the duties of the O.K.W. and the German Red Cross, and to replace the former official Bureau.

The rate of the development thus begun increased considerably after the resumption of postal services with Germany on April 1, 1946. This date was so important in the growth of the German Section during the post-war period that it may be well to use it for the purpose of dividing the rest of this survey in two parts.

(1). *End of Hostilities (May 7, 1945)*
to Resumption of Postal Service with Germany (April 1, 1946)

In view of the conditions of chaos existing in Germany, the Central Agency had decided to suspend entirely the despatch of information to the official Bureau and to the German Red Cross : this was on April 30, 1945, a few days before the end of hostilities. As it was later learnt in Geneva, most of the regular despatches of the German Section had for some time past failed to reach their destination and had been lost in transit.

Masses of information sent in by some ten Detaining Powers therefore accumulated in Geneva, where they were dealt with according to the established rules, pending the day when they could be passed on to some authority in Germany qualified to receive them. By June 1945, photostat copies of documents thus held up already filled 21 large cases.

The initial phase of the post-war period was therefore, for the German Section, mainly one of preparation. During these months, the Agency applied itself, as far as it was able, to the pressing and indeed imperative task of re-establishing contact between German PW and their relatives.

The communication to relatives of information which came together in the card-index with their many applications, was only possible on a small scale during the first months after the end of hostilities, when the Section was reduced to making use of occasional means of forwarding. Thus a large mass of these communications, ready for despatch, accumulated in the German Section.

Influx of Applications from Relatives : Card No. 275

German families who, for many months past, had received hardly any letters or news from the fighting zone, now saw the official sources of information dry up, which had formerly been replenished by a methodical administration throughout the war. The mail of German PW was also, as a result of circumstances, practically held up during the first months which followed the end of the war. At this period PW formed a mass still on the move ; these men were placed in provisional camps, often transferred from place to place and inadequately provided with capture cards and writing paper.

Relatives, who were consumed by uncertainty and anxiety, turned of their own accord to the ICRC, knowing that it was mainly from the Committee that the O.K.W. and the German Red Cross had received their information. Since postal communication was broken off, those families who had such facilities, made increasing use of the medium of correspondents in Switzerland, to bring their applications before the Central Agency. Moreover, they turned more frequently to the various delegations which the Committee hastened to set up throughout Germany, as well as to the national and provincial welfare organizations, who passed on the applications received to the delegations. Thanks to the Committee's resources of road transport, all these enquiries were brought to Geneva.

Thus, despite the suspension of the postal service, the Agency very soon saw an increase in the flow of applications for searches. Since these applications arrived in a variety of forms and sizes, it was necessary to transcribe them to index cards in order to file them in the Section's index. This was a long task ; to carry it out efficiently, a standard research card was required which could be placed in the index when filled in. For this purpose, Card No. 275, which had been devised in 1940, when the French Section was in similar difficulties, was again used. One side of this card was reserved for a description of the man sought, whilst the other bore the Agency's address. Part of the printed matter informed the applicant that no acknowledgement would be sent, and this precaution saved the Section valuable time.

The Agency itself had Cards No. 275 printed and issued them in Germany during the summer of 1945 through the delegations of the ICRC. Many of the German organizations also had these cards printed. Owing to the suspension of postal traffic, it also fell to the delegations to return these cards to the Agency when filled in. Up to June 30, 1947, the number of cards received was 355,400 ¹.

By the intermediary of the delegations, information which Cards No. 275 elicited in the Section's files was, whenever possible, communicated to enquirers ².

Large quantities of Cards No. 275 soon accumulated in the card-index boxes, owing to the considerable time taken in the transcribing to cards and filing of the vast amount of information reaching Geneva. This accumulation was also due to the fact that no amount of publicity by the ICRC could dissuade German next of kin from sending the Agency applications relating to the countless men reported missing on the Eastern Front.

¹ The number of cards printed in Geneva and distributed in Germany amounted to 82,400.

² Communications from the Agency for relatives were received by the Delegations in the form of collective despatches carried by the Committee's vehicles. The Delegations passed them on for further despatch to the German Post Office, which had resumed its service within Germany to a great extent.

*Re-establishment of Contact between German PW and their
Relatives : The Red Cross Message (Card P. 10,079) ¹*

Whereas German next of kin, owing to lack of news, were in a state of almost complete uncertainty as to the fate of members of the forces, German PW, too, were often in entire ignorance of where their relatives were living, and indeed often did not know if they were still alive.

Inside Germany, a considerable proportion of the population had been forced to leave their former homes (the only address known to PW), as a result of events at the end of the war and at the beginning of the post-war period. To these refugees and evacuees of every kind on the home front were soon added those expelled from the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, the Sudeten Germans and the "Volksdeutsche" from the regions of the Danube and the Balkans. On the whole, an ever-increasing mass of German civilians on the move, displaced or dispersed, who had left hearth and home behind them without any clue and were thus not to be found. This multitude was moreover appreciably greater than the few million PW.

An equation with two unknown quantities therefore had to be solved : on both sides were people who lacked the addresses of those with whom they sought to regain contact. The problem could only be solved by the intervention of some centralizing agency. The vast number of individuals thus separated left no doubt of the magnitude of the undertaking. It fell to the ICRC to make this attempt from the autumn of 1945, by the introduction of the "Red Cross Message".

A valuable fund of information was available to the Central Agency, enabling it to act to some purpose in this sphere : this was the considerable quantity of data, growing from day to day, on German PW contained in the index of the German Section. These data represented an equal number of PW camp addresses ready to be sent off to any relatives making application. On the other hand, the Agency was almost completely

¹ The "Red Cross Message" should not be confused with the "Civilian Message" or "Form 61", also initiated by the ICRC and mentioned on p. 63.

without information concerning displaced German civilians. It was therefore indispensable, if contact was to be re-established between PW and civilians, to get displaced German next of kin, without news of a relative who was a PW or presumed to be so, to apply to the Central Agency. The surest means of achieving this was to promote the influx of applications for searches concerning these PW, accompanied by a twenty-five word message of family and personal news, and including the address of the applicant.

It was with this purpose in mind that the Red Cross Message or Card P. 10,079 was devised and introduced. In order to speed up transmission and to relieve the German Section of a long copying process, it was necessary that the description of the relatives, the message and the PW's address should appear on a single form which could be easily censored.

The Red Cross Message was therefore introduced with the object of giving German next of kin the three following opportunities :

- (a) to inform PW by way of the Central Agency of their new address ;
- (b) to obtain the address of these PW when it was unknown to them ;
- (c) to send a message to PW.

One side of the card was reserved for the exact address of the applicant and the 25-word message, the other for particulars in detail of the PW for whom the message was intended.

Card No. P. 10,079 which provided the Agency and ultimately the PW with the new address of his relatives, served in some degree the same purpose for the PW as the capture card for his next of kin. This message was often preceded in the card-index of the Section by an anxious enquiry from a PW who, for a long time past, had lost all trace of his relatives. These requests from PW, encouraged by the Detaining Powers, reached the Agency in ever-increasing numbers.

At the end of September 1945, the French authorities gave permission for the issue through post-offices of P. 10,079 cards

in the whole of the French zone of occupation in Germany. During October, the ICRC was also authorized to introduce these cards in the American zone, where they were issued by local branches of the German Red Cross. Finally, at the beginning of 1946, the use of the Red Cross Message was agreed to in the British zone, and the German Red Cross in Hamburg was given the duty of their distribution to relatives. Thus, the system was soon in operation in all three Western zones. The fact that this scheme expanded to such a remarkable extent was sufficient proof of its urgent necessity.

P. 10,079 Cards, after being filled in by next of kin, were censored by the responsible authorities in each zone, forwarded to Geneva by way of the delegations by and means of the Committee's vehicles, and then passed on to the German Section, where they were checked in the card-index and dealt with as follows.

If the address was given in full and correctly, the message was at once forwarded to the addressee. When the address was not given, or when it was incomplete or inaccurate, the German Section, if the necessary information was available, completed the card before despatch, and at the same time forwarded the PW's address to his next of kin on a form. Finally, when the address was unknown both to the sender and to the German Section, the card was placed in the index to await the arrival of information enabling the message to be despatched and the relatives to be informed.

The ICRC had nearly one million and a half P. 10,079 Cards printed in Switzerland and distributed in Germany, by means of its delegations. A number of German welfare organizations had similar cards printed locally; thus the use of the "Red Cross Message" was widely spread.

The first cards filled in by next of kin were returned to Geneva in November 1945. Up to June 30, 1947, the Agency had received 1,644,036, of which it was able to forward 806,793 to the addressees.

The proportion of cards which could be forwarded decreased as time went on. This may easily be understood if it be remembered that the number of relatives who had been able to make

contact with PW constantly grew, and that the P. 10,079 Cards which reached the Agency concerned an increasing number of military personnel, whom their relatives had hitherto sought in vain.

The system provided that next of kin could make use only once of the Red Cross Message. In practice, however, it often occurred that two or three members of the same family each sent in a message, in the attempt to get in touch with the same PW ; this complicated the Agency's work and was likely to delay the contact desired.

The Red Cross Message scheme enabled the Central Agency to find a satisfactory solution to a problem as urgent as it was difficult ; the German Section thus gradually mastered a situation which at first sight appeared overwhelming.

Thus, thanks to Card No. 275, to the Red Cross Message, and to the means of transport available to the Committee, a twofold stream of applications and information was established by degrees, at a time when exchange of messages or information by post was still impossible.

Influx of Information in bulk

During the first months of the post-war period, information concerning hundreds of thousands of German PW captured by the Allied forces in the final phase of operations and after the end of hostilities reached the Central Agency only very slowly. At that time, PW formed a mass of men still on the move and only provisionally encamped, and the Allied military authorities, who were themselves constantly shifting from place to place, had their whole attention taken up by tasks (e.g. PW food supplies, etc.) which were more urgent than the counting of PW and the drawing up of nominal rolls. Moreover, as seen below, the Allies were at this time examining the question of a distinct status for members of units who gave themselves up in obedience to the terms of surrender, and did not supply lists of these men.

It is true that this delay in the despatch of information by the

official Bureaux¹ of the three Allied Western Powers, had in fact little impact on the Agency's general Services or on the German Section, as they were completely absorbed in the work of checking and handling the data received earlier. Reference has been made above² to the difficult situation in which these Services found themselves, from the end of 1944, owing to the increasing influx of information. This situation grew steadily worse during the summer and autumn of 1945; it was, indeed, at about that time that the flood of official lists and identity cards from Allied sources reached its height, at which it remained throughout 1946. To this was added the constantly increasing number of applications (Cards 275 and P. 10,079) reaching the German Section, the handling of which occupied a large proportion of the staff.

Owing to the immense amount of information which reached the Agency (often more than a year after the date of capture or of death) the time which elapsed before the information had been copied on to cards and filed in the index gave rise to some anxiety. Vast quantities of applications awaiting action accumulated in the card-index, and the main duty of the German Section at that time, the re-establishing of contact between PW and their relatives, was in danger of being frustrated.

If a serious setback was to be avoided, the output of work in the German Section had to be increased at all costs. Whereas the long period during the war when German losses were relatively low, had given the Section time to develop methods responding to the needs and wishes of the official bodies with which it co-operated, the turn of events now made it a matter of urgency and necessity to adopt working methods which would ensure a far greater output.

The difficulties encountered were considerable. In the first place, the inevitable dispersal of part of the staff at the end of the war and the lack of trained personnel to replace them; in the second, the gradual diminishing of the financial resources

¹ American official Bureau in France, British Bureau in London, and the French Bureau in Paris, to which were added later the Allied official Bureaux in Italy (British at Rimini, and American at Leghorn).

² See p. 164.

of the ICRC, which prevented an increase of staff. Although the German Section could not avoid a certain amount of fluctuation in its work and considerable delays, the satisfaction remained nevertheless, of having overcome most of the obstacles it had encountered. In no other National Section and at no other period of the Agency's work between 1939 and 1947 did changes on such a scale occur. This is illustrated by the following figures :

	1944	1945	1946
Total number of cards filed in the German Section during the year	612,000	2,870,000	4,605,000
Total mail (number of items) received by the Section during the year ¹	873,000	2,753,000	2,900,000
Average number of staff in the German Section.	66	145	190

From 1944, the German Section made use, to an increasing extent, of the very efficient help of the Auxiliary Sections working for the Agency in other towns in Switzerland. This form of aid was, however, still not enough. Since there was a lack of staff available in Geneva, the Agency consulted with the military authorities, and from the autumn of 1945 set up working teams amongst the German internees in Switzerland and later, amongst German PW in a French camp near Geneva. These teams, often consisting of highly qualified men, gave invaluable aid to the Section at critical moments ².

Transmission of German PW Mail

During the summer of 1945 the Swiss Post Office informed the ICRC that more than 1,200 bags of mail for German PW in France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States, were held up in their offices at Basle owing to the suspension of

¹ These figures do not include items received by the Lists Section and meant for the German Section.

² See p. 92.

postal traffic with Germany. The ICRC was therefore asked to forward this mail to Germany by its own transport, if possible. The Committee was able to give effect to this request, and the Agency organized in September the sorting of the mail by postal districts. Since it was impossible to undertake this amount of work in the Agency itself, it was entrusted, by agreement with the competent authorities, to selected members of the German forces interned in Switzerland. As soon as it was sorted, the mail was sent to Germany by Red Cross vehicles and there handed over to the German Post Office or to the censor. In seven months, that is from October 1945 to April 1946, over six million letters and cards were thus sorted under the Committee's auspices and forwarded by its own transport. The resumption of postal traffic in April 1946 fortunately relieved Geneva of this additional burden.

Special Problems: Surrendered Enemy Personnel, and German Civilians evacuated from Eastern Europe

Any account of the period which followed the end of the war would be incomplete without reference to two categories of war victims which, the one military, and the other civilian, placed the German Section before serious difficulties.

Immediately after the capitulation of the German Army, many more thousands of men gave themselves to the Allies, the majority in obedience to the terms of surrender. These units were disarmed and confined in certain areas. Since the status of PW had not been granted by all the Powers to these men — "SEP" or Surrendered Enemy Personnel, as they were to be called later — the German Section received only scraps of information concerning them and had no means of making enquiries about them. The Agency, owing to the flood of applications from relatives who believed these men to be "missing", was in a difficult position. It had to content itself with the occasional lists and news sent in by the German commandants and camp leaders of the huge regional encampments in which SEP were assembled. The efforts of the Committee to secure for them a status equal to that of PW were only partly success-

ful, and did little to reduce the Agency's difficulties. Indeed, it was only by the return of these men to their homes, after being gradually released or converted into civilian workers, that the SEP problem took its course towards a practical solution.

German civilians evacuated from the countries of Eastern Europe set problems of various kinds for the German Section. Its means of action were very limited, faced as it was by the mass transfers of German-speaking civilians expelled from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia, who came streaming into Germany where disorder reigned, and by the flood of enquiries, often by wire, which accompanied this exodus.

Searches, which in general had small chance of success, implied enquiring at the last known residence outside Germany, in order to try and follow the trace of refugees to places of assembly, refuge or internment somewhere in Germany.

In Czechoslovakia, the delegation of the ICRC was able to supply information direct, in a few cases. Later, the communal administration offices (*Narodny Vibor*) undertook the task of tracing the German civilians in that country. In Poland, it was not until 1947 that the Polish Red Cross was able to co-operate in the search for German civilians. Finally, in the absence of more efficient means, and despite the uncertainty of this method, the German Section frequently had recourse to the broadcasting of nominal lists during the especially critical post-war period, and it must be said that this method gave useful results.

(2) *After Resumption of the Postal Services with Germany*
(April 1, 1946)
Increase in Flow of Enquiries

The official resumption of a postal service between Germany, Switzerland and most other countries, brought the German Section a certain relief, since it allowed the direct and regular forwarding of the great number of communications awaiting despatch to relatives. On the other hand, this resumption gave rise to a vast fresh influx of applications. Since the majority

of the 275 and P. 10, 079 Cards had until then still not been answered, it was natural that next of kin should avail themselves widely of the opportunity of writing direct to the Agency. A flood of letters, usually both long and urgent, and often followed up, poured into the German Section, whilst standard cards continued to arrive in steady volume. The great pressure of work laid on the Section at that time is clear from comparison of the following figures :

Number of Applications (Letters and Forms) received by the German Section :

Average 1942-1944	44,000
In 1945	207,000
In 1946	737,000

If it be remembered that hundreds of thousands of items of information from Allied sources reached Geneva during the same period, and that pressing reasons forbade any increase in staff, the difficulties confronting the Section may be realized. Although, from the autumn of 1946, an average of 1,000 " tallies" a day had been reached, these were often quite obsolete, or even contrary to actual facts. Thus, in certain extreme cases, data concerning the capture of a service-man did not get into the index until after his release, which brought fresh enquiries from the relatives.

Information also frequently became out of date owing to the fact that some detaining Powers, e. g. the United States, began to hand over part of their prisoners to other Powers, such as France and the British Commonwealth. These transfers caused frequent misunderstandings, since the U.S. authorities described these men, who had in reality only been sent back to Europe, as having been " repatriated ", whereas the PW themselves, the Agency and next of kin gave this term its true meaning.

Amongst the applications concerning service-men, a particularly large number related to those reported missing on the Eastern front. As already stated, the German Section had neither information nor means of taking action in this area, and

therefore endeavoured to dissuade the public, chiefly by printed forms, from applying to Geneva and referred it to the German Tracing Bureaux, described here.

The mass of enquiries received by the German Section did not all relate to members of the forces ; applications were made to the Agency in increasing numbers to trace civilians. This activity, which did not come within the Conventions, added a good deal to the burden of work. Since the end of the war, and in Germany itself, a whole network of *Suchdienste*, or Tracing Services, had been set up which were expert in this type of tracing, and had extensive card-indexes at their centres in Munich and Hamburg. The public was, therefore, not bound to apply to the Agency in this matter, as it was in the case of tracing members of the forces. The ICRC made immediate contact with the *Suchdienste* ; it offered them advice, and gave them stimulus and support in the co-ordination of their activities. It was the hope of the Committee that these offices would gradually take over from it the heavy burden of its work in tracing civilians. At the same time, intensive publicity was given by press and wireless to the fact that the German public would be well advised to apply to the Agency only in cases concerning members of the forces.

*Problem of unsolicited transmission of information
by the Agency*

The Central Agency was conscious of the heavy responsibility resting on it owing to the existence in Geneva of a very large amount of information still unknown to next of kin, and was increasingly concerned with the serious problem of how to get it to Germany as speedily as possible. As already stated, information which had accumulated in Geneva since April 30, 1945, owing to the dissolution of the German official Bureau, had since that date been communicated to next of kin only when both application and information cards came together in the Section's card-index. A very considerable amount of data could therefore not be forwarded. The situation was especially serious concerning information bearing on the deaths

of members of the forces ; as a result of this inability to communicate with them, many German families, who had suffered a loss months before, were still in a state of tragic unawareness.

It was, therefore, a matter of necessity that local and regional German bodies should be able to ensure at least the distribution to the relatives concerned of the most urgent information, that relating to deaths, until a Central Office had been set up which would replace the former official Bureau ¹.

The Agency applied itself to this urgent problem from that moment. With a view to hastening its solution, an expert of the Agency went to Germany in the summer of 1945 to inspect some of the many regional organizations which had been set up since the war ended. A certain time was to elapse, however, before a central body could be found which offered the necessary guarantees and to which (after it had been duly recognized and commissioned by the Allied Occupation authorities) the Agency could send its valuable data.

In April 1946, after the resumption of the postal services between Switzerland and Germany, it was decided to wait no longer, and to send unsolicited notifications of deaths which had accumulated in the German Section since the end of the war, and all those arriving later. These notifications were made to the burgomasters of the places of residence of next of kin, whenever the address was known, and these officials were requested to have death certificates drawn up by the registrar and conveyed to the relatives. This method seemed to provide sufficient security, in view of the official functions of the burgomasters and of the existing possibility of reaching them henceforth direct by post. Moreover, a number of the burgomasters, working in co-operation, had set up small communal offices. With regard to notifications of death in cases where the address of next of kin was unknown, it was decided to forward these to the Tracing Bureau of the Bavarian Red Cross in Munich ; this agency, thanks to the extensive card-index it possessed, seemed to

¹ The German Red Cross, which might in principle have been considered as a central body for giving information to next of kin, in fact no longer existed in its centralised form and was able to re-establish itself only slowly and in some of the occupation zones.

offer the best chances of finding the relatives concerned. During the following months, a considerable part of the work of the German Section consisted in sending out these notifications.

From this time onwards a number of legal documents and papers from PW were also forwarded to next of kin through the competent District Courts.

Meanwhile, it was discovered that the former card-index of the German army and a large part of the staff of what had been the *Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle* or WAST (German official Bureau), had resumed their work in the summer of 1945 under American supervision at Fürstenhagen, near Kassel ; they were transferred, in the spring of 1946, to the American sector in Berlin, and thence to Frohnau in the French sector, in the summer of the same year. There, under the name of " Office for liquidation of the former German Bureau WAST " ¹, under French supervision and commissioned by the Inter-Allied Control Council, this office continued and completed, by the intermediary of registrars' offices, notifications to the next of kin, of deaths of German service-men which took place before the end of the war. The Agency was able to verify on the spot that this organization was working in a satisfactory manner. The German Section therefore decided in December 1946 to cease working through the burgomasters, and to rely exclusively on the new WAST organization for forwarding all information in future on the deaths of members of the forces.

As regards notifications of deaths, this decision restored in fact the normal activity and procedure of the Agency which had been interrupted since the close of hostilities. The German Section handed over to WAST at this time all papers in its possession relating to the deaths of unidentified members of the forces. In most cases, the only indication found was the regimental number on the identity disc, and WAST was alone in a position to establish the identity of the deceased, thanks to the card-index of the German Army in its care.

¹ *Abwicklungsstelle der Deutschen Dienststelle für die Benachrichtigung der nächsten Angehörigen von Gefallenen der ehemaligen Deutschen Wehrmacht.*

The Agency also handed over to WAST, during the summer of 1947, some 75,000 "collections" of personal effects of German members of the forces which had been sent to Geneva since 1945 by the official Bureaux of several States¹. A separate department was set up in WAST to take charge of handing over all these effects to next of kin, besides those which it received direct from different parts of the world.

The very important problem of the systematic transmission to Germany of all data which the German Section possessed concerning the deaths of members of the forces, was thus satisfactorily solved.

The Section continued, on the other hand, to communicate information on German PW only on request. It was argued that, by the end of 1946, all next of kin, or nearly all, had been able to re-establish contact with PW by post, and that any regular forwarding of information was no longer required.

Beginning of Winding-up

Owing to the repatriation and release of an increasing number of PW, the situation of this category of war victims tended to right itself by degrees, and the duties of the German Section were at the same time lightened. These duties were also reduced to a certain degree by the fact that cases relating to Austrians had been dealt with by an independent National Section since the autumn of 1945, that those concerning men from Alsace-Lorraine were dealt with by the French Section, and those concerning men of the South Tyrol by the Italian Section.

During the first months of 1947, the transcription to index cards of the great volume of information received from the Allied official Bureaux up to the end of the previous year was completed. Thenceforth, the German Section, whose staff was now being reduced², was able to devote the greater part of its time to correspondence and enquiries arising from the great

¹ See p. 79.

² On June 30, 1947 there were still 98 assistants in the German Section.

number of letters which were still coming in and which increasingly referred to complicated cases.

It was thus not until over two years after the end of the war that the largest of the National Sections of the Central Agency began to be wound up, after a busy career of eight years, of which this report has given only an incomplete survey.

Spanish Section Portuguese Section Latin American Section

As soon as the Central Agency opened in September 1939, a Spanish Section was formed, which continued in fact the activities of the "Spanish Service" set up at Geneva in 1936 at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War¹. At the close of the Civil War, in April 1939, a large quantity of mail continued to reach the ICRC from Spain and France. This correspondence had reference not only to situations still arising out of this war, but also to cases of Spanish refugees in France, Latin America, the USSR and other countries.

Later, as the need arose, a Portuguese Section and a Latin American Section were set up. For the sake of convenience, these three Sections were grouped under the same direction.²

We shall consider separately the work of each of these Sections.

SPANISH SECTION

In April 1939, at the end of the Civil War, about 500,000 Spanish Republicans took refuge in France; it was chiefly with these men that the Spanish Section was concerned throughout the World War.

From May 1939, a certain number of these refugees enlisted in the French Foreign Legion, and the Section undertook many

¹ The activities of the ICRC during the Spanish Civil War is the subject of a separate report.

² The staff of these Sections never exceeded five persons.

enquiries about their fate. A still greater number were conscripted by the French authorities and detailed to groups of foreign workers, but their status was never clearly defined. In May and June 1940, a certain number were captured by the German army, interned with French combatants in PW camps and reported to the Central Agency as "Spaniards".

In 1942, the Agency learned through enquiries from relatives that Spanish nationals were amongst those in the concentration camp of Mauthausen in Austria; it ascertained that amongst them were a great many of the above-mentioned PW. It was only at the end of the war that it became known that 7,211 Spaniards had been deported to Mauthausen.

As in the case of deportees of all nationalities, the ICRC made repeated efforts to learn the names of these Spaniards and to find out what had become of them, but no lists were ever sent to the Agency. Only a few messages were forwarded, and some notifications of death were received in reply to the enquiries made by the Section.

On May 5, 1945, the Spanish survivors of Mauthausen were released by American forces and soon afterwards brought back to France. One of them, who had been employed in the camp office, had succeeded in preserving the lists of names recorded throughout the time the Spaniards were held in captivity, and was able to hand them over personally to the Agency. It was thus known that 4,813 deportees had died in captivity in the camp. Their names were at once communicated to their next of kin in France and Spain.

The numerous Spanish refugees living in France frequently applied to the Central Agency for help in getting in touch with their relatives in Spain. The Spanish Section thus became responsible for the transmission of messages and various documents. There were, besides, enquiries concerning Spanish children who had been harboured in various countries in the course of the civil war, and whose parents had lost trace of them. Lastly, the Section had to deal with cases of Spaniards engaged in the forces of the belligerents.

PORTUGUESE SECTION

As Portugal was not involved in the war, the Portuguese Section had only a limited task.

It had to deal with a few cases of Portuguese seamen, chiefly natives of Goa and Damao (Portuguese India), serving on British merchant vessels and captured by the Germans. It also received lists of Portuguese members of the "Hongkong Volunteer Defence Corps" captured by the Japanese, and lists of Portuguese civilians living in refugee camps in the Far East.

Finally, it had to handle various cases of Portuguese civilians living in countries with which postal communications were difficult.

LATIN AMERICAN SECTION

After the severance of diplomatic relations between the States of Latin America and Germany, Italy and Japan, and the entry into the war of some of these States, the Central Agency had to extend its activities to nationals of these countries.

It was chiefly with civilians interned in the Axis countries and in Japan that the Latin American Section was concerned. Lists were received and forwarded to the governments of the countries of which they were citizens. In certain cases the delegates of the ICRC informed Geneva of the whereabouts of internees who were nationals of Latin American States.

The Section was also concerned with seamen from the Argentine, Brazil and Chile, serving in the British merchant service, captured at sea and interned in Germany, and with South American airmen taken prisoner while serving in the Allied air forces.

We should also mention the members of the Brazilian Expeditionary Corps who were captured, or who fell in action fighting with the Allied forces on the Italian front. Their names were

communicated to the Agency by the German Official Bureau and forwarded to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, all these civilian internees and PW frequently requested the Agency to forward correspondence and news to their families.

Scandinavian Section

This Section was set up in April 1940, at the beginning of the military operations which finally led to the occupation of Denmark and Norway by the Germans. Its object was to deal with cases of Danish and Norwegian nationals. Although Sweden was not at war, the Agency likewise had to handle questions which concerned Swedish citizens, and for reasons of language, they were also included in the Scandinavian Section. After the landing of American forces in Iceland (July, 1941), the Section also undertook the few cases relating to Icelandic nationals.

Because of the particular nature of the war in Denmark and Norway, the Germans left the service men of these two countries at liberty. As Sweden and Iceland did not take part in the actual fighting, the number of cases affecting their nationals with which the Agency had to deal was necessarily small. It is not surprising, therefore, that the activity of the Scandinavian Section in behalf of Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Icelandic nationals was not extensive.

The main task was to search for merchant seamen from these countries, who were serving with the Allies and about whom their relatives in the homeland had no news. The Section also undertook to search for civilians residing in countries with which the Scandinavian countries no longer had postal communications.

The Section served as intermediary for passing on news to the relatives of Norwegian and Danish volunteers fighting with the Allies, when these men were taken prisoner by the Germans. It undertook a similar task in the case of the small

numbers of civilian internees detained by both groups of belligerents.

Lastly, the Section instituted a great many inquiries regarding Norwegians and Danes detained for political reasons and imprisoned or deported by the Germans. These inquiries, like all others of this nature, unfortunately proved unavailing.

Belgian Section Luxemburg Section

BELGIAN SECTION

The Belgian Section was set up on May 15, 1940, during the "Eighteen Days Campaign" (May 10-28, 1940), when the German Wehrmacht advanced from the banks of the Meuse to the coast of the North Sea.

Military Personnel

During the days after the capitulation, part of the Belgian Army was sent into captivity in Germany, where the PW taken during the operations were already in camp.

Notifications by lists from the official German Bureau and capture cards were first received by the Agency early in June: the flood of information reached its height in September. Many applications from the men's relatives were received at the same time in the Belgian Section. In these conditions, and in order to avoid too long a delay in replying to them, it was decided to forward the information given in the capture cards direct to the families concerned, without waiting for cards to "tally" in the index. These notifications were sent at the rate of about 1,500 a week. At this time, the Section reached its peak, with a staff of 27.

A considerable number of prisoners reported to the Agency that they were without news of their relatives; hundreds of thousands of Belgians, fleeing in disorder before the invasion, had found permanent refuge across the Channel, or temporary shelter in the North, and above all in the South of France. The search for these families called for a good deal of perseverance, as the difficulties involved were considerable.

The general confusion was further increased by the presence in many departments of the South of France of Belgian units which had escaped before the final occupation of their country, but who were believed to have been taken prisoner with the main forces. When these units reported themselves at the demarcation line of the occupied Zone of France, in September 1940, they were for the most part deported to Germany and interned in camps. The total strength of Belgian PW was at that time 166,400, of whom 5,600 were officers. The repatriation of the Flemish PW in the spring of 1941 reduced this number to 80,000, after which it did not appreciably diminish. During the last months of the war, 76,000 Belgian PW were still in German hands, of whom 4,500 were officers.

The Detaining Power sent a copy of the official lists of information direct to the Belgian Red Cross in Brussels. The Belgian Section had thus only to forward to this organization the results of its searches concerning missing members of the forces (a total of more than 2,000 at the end of 1941). These enquiries were addressed to the National Red Cross Societies, chiefly to the British, French, German and that of the Belgian Congo, as well as to the French *préfectures* and the Belgian Offices in France, Morocco, Portugal and Spain. Finally, the Section devised a system of regimental enquiries by making extracts from the official lists of officers and NCOs of Belgian Army units and from these records questionnaires were sent to these concerned for information about the missing. On the basis of these extracts, questionnaires relating to the missing men were sent to those concerned in the camps.

An important task of the Belgian Section at this time was the checking of the many lists of Belgian PW in Germany to whom relief organizations on the Congo wished to send parcels. The object of this check was to establish the precise address of the consignees, as the lists gave only names, and the addressees frequently changed camps.

From 1943 onwards, the work of the Section relating to members of the armed forces consisted mainly in obtaining for their relatives news of airmen and seamen who had joined up in Great Britain, as well as the Belgian legionaries fighting

in the Free French Forces, and to ensure the exchange of correspondence, official documents, and various papers, between PW in Germany and their relatives. Between the liberation of Belgium and the end of the war, the Agency alone in fact was in a position to take charge of this correspondence, as communications between Germany and Belgium were entirely suspended.

In spring 1945, the Section was fortunately in possession of up-to-date lists, which the Belgian camp leaders had drawn up at its request. The delegation of the ICRC in Berlin, for its part, forwarded to Geneva any information it had been able to collect regarding transfers of PW and the liberation of the various camps by the Allied armies.

Since the end of the war, the Section has attempted to obtain information regarding Belgian soldiers who were missing after compulsory recruitment in the German armed forces.

Civilian Internees

The number of Belgian civilian internees was relatively small : some hundreds at Miranda de Ebro (Spain), lists of whom were not supplied to the Agency ; about a hundred in the Far East, under Japanese control, whose names were communicated through the Belgian Section to the Belgian Authorities ; 230 missionaries interned at Wei-Shien ; and finally, a few scattered throughout Great Britain, Italy and North Africa. The Section carried out the transmission of more than a million messages between the internees and their relatives.

Civilians

Until 1942, an important place in its work was given to non-interned civilians. During that period, the Section was busy searching for those missing after the exodus of the population in May 1940. To save time, it was necessary to open enquiries, and sometimes follow them up simultaneously in France, Great Britain, Spain, Africa and even America. The Section worked in close co-operation with the Belgian Red

Cross and its delegations in the Congo and elsewhere abroad. Very satisfactory results were obtained in this way. During the whole period of the war, the Section was responsible for the forwarding of documents of every kind, such as wills, certificates issued by the "Etat civil", bi-monthly lists of deaths in the Congo, death certificates of Belgians killed in Great Britain during the air raids, and others.

Civilian Workers in Germany

The number of Belgian civilians employed in Germany amounted to about 300,000. The Section was responsible for the forwarding of messages between them and their relatives until the beginning of 1945, but after this date the military operations allowed only occasional communications of this kind.

Political Detainees

It is estimated that about 12,000 political detainees were held in custody by the German authorities in September 1944, of whom 4,000 were on Belgian territory. Eighty-four per cent of the applications forwarded to the German Red Cross by the Agency remained unanswered. Out of 1,247 enquiries opened on behalf of political detainees in Germany, only 25 had a positive result.

Internees in Concentration Camps

From 1943 onwards, the Belgian Section received a considerable number of applications from relatives concerning deportees. Apart from these, the Belgian Repatriations Commission sent the Agency a total of 10,000 cards of application. All "tallies" established on the basis of receipts for parcels¹ — the only means of information at the disposal of the Agency — was passed on.

* * *

¹ See p. 54.

The work of the Belgian Section may be summed up in the fact that on June 30, 1947 its card index held more than 1,000,000 enquiry and information cards. The lists of PW in Germany drawn up by the OKW and camp leaders amounted to 67,000 pages. There were 50,000 individual files (service-men and civilians). The number of enquiries opened may be estimated at 150,000 or more; the number of documents and messages forwarded by the Section at 300,000; the number of communications of data sent to prisoners' relatives at 100,000.

The average number of the staff was ten. In periods of increased activity, from twenty to twenty-five assistants, of whom a third were voluntary, gave their services to the Section.

LUXEMBURG SECTION

The work of the Luxemburg Section was closely related to that of the Belgian Section and both were under the same management.

Members of the Armed Forces

Soon after the occupation of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg on May 10, 1940, a large number of Luxemburg nationals were deported to Germany. Some were enlisted in the German Labour Organization, others were sent to the Eastern territories or to concentration camps. A third category, mostly young men, were compulsorily enrolled in the Wehrmacht. This last category saw active service in all theatres of war, and the Luxemburg Section learned through the men's relatives that several hundreds of them were posted missing.

Enquiries set on foot by the Section were addressed to the German Red Cross, which replaced the Luxemburg Red Cross throughout the occupation. At the beginning of 1946, all applications concerning Luxemburg nationals enrolled in the Wehrmacht and to which the Section was not in a position to reply, were handed over to the Luxemburg Commissioner for Repatriation, who now had the task of instituting enquiries in all countries.

A certain number of Luxemburg nationals fought with the Allies. Those who were captured in 1940 wearing French uniform were classed by the German authorities as French prisoners of war, and their cases were dealt with at the Agency by the French Section. Others who were not taken prisoner during the Battle of France, enlisted in the Foreign Legion and took part in the military operations in North Africa. Those who were captured were interned in Italy and almost all were later removed to Germany. The Section dealt with the exchange of news between the men in the Foreign Legion or who had been taken prisoner, and their relatives. Notifications of death were sent to the German Red Cross, with the request that the families of the deceased be informed.

Civilians

As from May 15, 1940, the Luxemburg Section received many applications from persons who were anxious about their relatives living in the Grand Duchy. Similarly, people in Luxemburg were concerned about the fate of relatives who had taken refuge in France and Great Britain, or who had been sent to Germany as civilian workers. These cases usually had to go through the German Red Cross. Requests were sent to it for the necessary searches to be made, for the communication of reports on the results of such enquiries, and for the transmission of documents of all kinds.

The activities of the Luxemburg Section increased considerably at the moment of the counter-offensive launched by the German army under Field-Marshal von Rundstedt in December 1944. A large number of inhabitants of the Grand Duchy were then removed to Germany and their families were left in a state of great anxiety, as postal services were cut between the two countries. The Section managed to trace a certain number of the persons concerned. On June 30, 1947, the records of the Luxemburg Section contained about 5,000 index cards and 1,000 individual files.

Dutch Section

On May 10, 1940, the German forces crossed the frontiers of the Netherlands and the Dutch forces, compelled to lay down their arms after five days' fighting, were demobilized and disbanded, whilst the majority of the prisoners were released.

The Dutch Section, set up on May 13, 1940, first had to arrange for an interchange of news between the Netherlands and the Dutch who had taken refuge in Great Britain, or those living abroad, especially in the Dutch East Indies. It also had soon to trace civilians ; the Dutch population was subjected to heavy bombing from the air, mass evacuation for military reasons, requisitioning of civilian workers, continual arrests of hostages, and the Jews were deported.

In February and March 1942, the Indian Archipelago also suffered war and invasion ; in the course of these, many members of the Dutch military and naval forces fell into the hands of the Japanese. The Section henceforward had to deal with PW and civilian internees in the camps of the Far East.

For the sake of clarity, the activities of the Dutch Section have been divided into those concerning events in Europe, and those relating to operations in the Indian Archipelago.

(A). EVENTS IN EUROPE

After the capitulation of the Dutch Army in 1940, the greater part of the prisoners were released, with the exception of a few hundred officers of the regular army. In 1943, however, thousands of officers and NCOs were mustered in assembly camps

by the occupying authorities and sent to Germany where, in April 1944, the number of Dutch PW was approximately 10,000. The lists drawn up by the German High Command were sent at regular intervals to the Central Agency, which forwarded photostat copies to London ¹.

At the same time, the Section worked in close contact with the British Red Cross in searching for Dutch seamen and airmen who had joined the Royal Navy or the R.A.F. Lists of the dead and missing were received from London, comprising about 2,500 names, which were communicated to the Dutch Red Cross at The Hague.

The Section's work for civilians was especially heavy. Immediately after the events of 1940, telegrams by hundreds and letters by thousands reached the Section from the Dutch East Indies, South Africa, and America, enquiring about the fate of people living in the Netherlands. In the autumn of 1940, two delegates from the Dutch Red Cross in Batavia (Contact Bureau), brought to Geneva eight large metal containers which held 60,000 applications on index cards. By January 1941, the Section had transmitted 100,000 enquiries to Holland, and had forwarded 63,000 positive replies to the applicants.

The Dutch population, as already mentioned, was especially hard hit by the effects of the war. During the hostilities, a total of 570,800 civilian workers were removed to Germany, to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, or to Poland. From the end of 1944, when communications between Germany and part of Holland had been severed, the Dutch Section had to serve as intermediary between the civilian workers and their relatives, by the exchange of messages.

Moreover, numbers of Dutch civilians were deported to Germany ². In spite of all the representations which it made in regard to this question, the ICRC was not able to extend its normal assistance to this category of people. The Section was

¹ From Oct. 6, 1941, until Sept. 1944, to the War Office. From August 27, 1943, until the close of hostilities to the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs through the Delegation of the ICRC.

² According to information received after the liberation, the number was 214,000, including 110,000 Jews.

nevertheless able to register the names and addresses of a great number of the Dutch deportees, thanks to the receipts for the parcels sent by the Committee to the concentration camps, which sometimes came back bearing several signatures.

Enquiries received after the liberation concerning Dutch deportees to Germany were, from December 1945 onwards, forwarded to the Netherlands Red Cross at The Hague, which had set up a Research Bureau able to deal with enquiries of this kind.

Of the 10,000 Dutch enrolled by the Wehrmacht, about 3,000 were reported missing on the Eastern front. Since the Central Agency received no information from the Soviet Union, the Section could not follow up enquiries about these men.

(B). EVENTS IN THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO

In February 1942, the Japanese forces landed in the Dutch East Indies. The population had to endure the hardships of occupation; thousands of settlers were arrested and put to forced labour in Burma or in Siam; other thousands, including women and children, were interned in the camps of Java and Sumatra. The work of the Dutch Section therefore increased, as regards both civilians and military personnel, who were cut off from any contact with the home country.

From March 20, 1942, until after the end of hostilities, the total figures given by the Japanese official Bureau in Tokyo, usually by cable, amounted to 98,000, including 16,800 notifications of deaths¹. The information received was brief, first names were often missing or were indicated by initials only; the army number, profession and nature of illness were given in phonetic Japanese in Latin characters, for which a glossary of professions and medical terms had to be made. The applicants, for their part, seldom gave precise details. The substitution of initials for the real first name, or of diminutives,

¹ At the time of the capitulation, the data received by the Section had amounted to 68,650, including 3,540 notifications of deaths.

a common practice in Holland, complicated work on the card-index considerably. The Dutch Section made a list of first names and their usual diminutives, such as Truus for Gertrude ; Bep for Elizabeth ; Riets for Frederick ; Kat, Katje, Catho, Trin, Trientje, or Toosje for Catherine ; Cor, Cees, Koor, Kees, Nel or Nelis for Cornelis, and so on.

By patient and scrupulous work, more than 12,000 cards were made to "tally" up to 1945, and the information was forwarded to the applicants.

Photostats of cables received from the Japanese official Bureau were forwarded at regular intervals to the Dutch Red Cross at The Hague and in London, also to the representative of the Dutch East Indies Red Cross at Melbourne. When filing the information, it was found that many civilian internees had already appeared on PW lists.

A certain number of civilian internees were able to send news direct to their relatives in Holland, and thousands of reply letter-cards, collected by the Red Cross at The Hague, were received up to April 1944 for transmission to the Dutch East Indies. The information supplied by this exchange of mail often led to "tallies", and information could thus be sent to applicants, especially in Switzerland, Great Britain, America and South Africa. Finally, it was sometimes possible by this means to complete the addresses of relatives in Holland.

Communications between the Netherlands and her overseas territory having broken down, the Section received a considerable number of requests for news concerning Dutch nationals presumed interned or prisoners of war in the territories occupied by the Japanese. Thousands of enquiry forms were sent to the Japanese Bureau for military personnel, or to the Japanese Red Cross for civilians, but the results of these enquiries were most disappointing.

On October 5, 1945, the first message from Batavia, dated September 12, was received at the Agency. A fortnight later, the delegation of the ICRC in Cairo informed Geneva that they could send the Committee's mail to the Dutch East Indies.

* * *

The Dutch Section, with an average staff of over 45 in 1943 and 1944, thus had to deal with numerous tasks of every variety. They had much correspondence with the offices of the Dutch Red Cross at The Hague, in Curaçao and Surinam, with the American, Australian and South African Red Cross Societies, as well as with the Netherlands Emergency Red Cross Committee, a committee of the Dutch Red Cross set up in London in May 1940. Up to June 30, 1947, the Section had received 211,000 letters and 12,000 telegrams ; it had opened 86,250 enquiries and forwarded 190,000 messages. By this date, its index-cards numbered 350,000.

In March 1943, the records of the Netherlands Red Cross were completely destroyed during heavy bombing. The Central Agency then had photostats made of all lists received in Geneva, and the Dutch Section made duplicates of all correspondence exchanged. These documents were sent to The Hague, thus enabling the Netherlands Red Cross Information Bureau to continue its work.

French Colonial Section

The French Colonial Section was opened in June 1940, to include all the cases of combatants—PW, dead and missing—natives of the French Colonial Empire¹. If the rule followed by the Agency in establishing national sections had been strictly applied, this Section would have been properly embodied in the French Section. But for reasons which will be given further on, and which were due both to the intricate nature of the questions involved, and the large number of cases to be handled, it was found necessary to open a Section independent of the French Section proper, to deal with cases relating to natives.

The work undertaken in Geneva for Colonial and North African native combatants during the war, in certain respects exceeded that of the other national Sections, for two main reasons: one, because the work was done for people unfamiliar with European customs and for the most part illiterate; the other, because the very characteristics of these races demanded distinct working methods.

The foregoing explains why the Colonial Section occupied a place apart in the Agency. Whereas the main national Sections were started so to speak automatically when the countries concerned entered the war, the establishment of the Colonial Section was due rather to an initiative of the ICRC.

The report on the Colonial Section will therefore deal at length with its particular task, the peculiarities of its structure and its working methods, which are not described in the first part of this volume.

¹ In this report, the French Colonial Section will be called "Colonial Section".

Besides the receipt and transmission of news supplied by the Detaining Power, the work of the Colonial Section touched on the following points :

- (1) Maintenance of the link between the PW and his next of kin ;
- (2) Search for the missing ;
- (3) Identification of the dead and notification to the home country of deaths (with a duplicate to the French *Etat civil*) ;
- (4) Cooperation with Government agencies in France and in the colonies.

Of these four points, the two first were among the usual tasks of the Agency, whereas the last two specifically belonged to the Colonial Section.

OPENING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTION

At the outset of the war, the cases concerning native PW and missing were handled in the same way as those of French PW and missing ; but this method soon had to be abandoned. The lack of any *Etat civil* in certain countries ¹, the illiterate condition of most of the natives—certain tribes have even no written language—their countless namesakes, and the fact that the information supplied by the Detaining Power constantly comprised distorted names, led to many errors and infinite difficulties in the filing.

To meet these serious drawbacks, and to prevent the cards referring to native soldiers being lost forever in the French card-index, a distinct Section was required, with experts having a knowledge of the languages, geography and administrative organization of the various parts of the French Colonial Empire.

The language difficulties encountered were so great that at

¹ For instance, in Morocco.

one time the ICRC considered the offer of the French authorities in Morocco to organize such a section themselves. But this course would have given an advantage to combatants of Arabic tongue over those of Negro Africa or of the other French colonies (Indo-China, Madagascar, the West Indies). It also had one serious defect : during the tragic month of June 1940, it seemed as if one day France would be separated from her colonies and unable to communicate with them. The Agency could not remain indifferent to the fate of these men, the more so as they numbered at the time over 70,000, and appeared more helpless than others, because so many were illiterate. Thus it was decided that the Section would be organized at Geneva itself, and the decision was amply justified by events. .

By June 1940, when the Section was opened, all the cards belonging to native soldiers were withdrawn from the French card-index and grouped into the new Colonial Index.

At the same time, a call went out for assistants who had lived in the countries concerned, both repatriated Swiss and former legionaries in the French colonial army ; of these about fifty responded.

This large initial staff is explained by the fact that out of a total of roughly 80,000 cases of PW, dead and missing notified to the Section during the War, 60,000 were due to the fighting in France in 1940, and 20,000 only to all the other campaigns together (military operations in Syria and Madagascar ; campaigns of the Free French Forces in North Africa, Italy and Corsica). The French campaign of 1944 had hardly any effect on the Colonial Section, as the German authorities gave no information about these men.

INFORMATION AND CARD-INDEXES

The initial work of the assistants was to check every name in the lists of PW and dead, and the particulars concerning the missing, to correct errors in names, and to check and piece together, with the help of maps and directories, the addresses of next of kin and the places of origin.

(A). *Basic Card Index*

Once this work was completed, the basic Colonial Index was established as follows in the autumn of 1940 :

(1) Division by geographical regions, i.e., each of the principal colonies, groups of colonies, or French protectorates had a separate card-index. Thus there were : for North Africa, an index referring to Morocco, another to Algeria and a third to Tunisia ; for French West Africa, a single index including Senegal, French Nigeria, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Togo and the Cameroons ; there was an index for Indo-China (Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina), another for Madagascar, one for the French West Indies, etc.

(2) Each regional index was subdivided according to military units. Thus, the index Algeria had subdivision : " 1st Reg. Algerian Tirailleurs " ; the index " French West Africa " had a subdivision " 14th Reg. Senegalese Tirailleurs ", and so forth.

(3) Within each regiment, classification was done by alphabetical order, according to parentage. For instance, when filing Arab names, " MOHAMED son of Miloud " was placed before " MOHAMED son of Tayeb ".

The index dealt only with the fighting in 1939-1940 ; it was later found necessary, on technical grounds, to open independent card-indexes for each campaign : Syria, Free French Forces (Tchad-Libya), Madagascar, etc.

(B). *Numerical Card-Indexes*

The Section was soon obliged, to make a strict check of identity possible, to supplement the basic card-index by numerical indexes, established according to PW numbers and army numbers. This cross-index scheme, in which several indexes played their part, was indispensable :

(a) In the case of the numerical index according to PW numbers, because the German authorities had solved the native language problem by making numerical, and not nominal indexes ;

(b) In the case of the numerical index according to army numbers, because the Italians gave no numbers to the native PW taken in Libya, but merely registered their army number on the capture cards which they forwarded to Geneva.

These same PW, after the capitulation of Italy, were sent to Germany, thence to France, then back from France to Germany, provided this time with PW numbers. The latter however were changed at each transfer, which called each time for a fresh and painstaking search in the two numerical indexes. This clearly shows the need for a double index.

Amongst the linguistic problems which confronted the Colonial Index, the most intricate was undoubtedly the classification of Arabic names. In North Africa the ancient Semitic custom still prevails; the Arabs have, as a rule, only first names: "MOHAMED, son of Hassen, son of Miloud" and so on. These first names give rise to countless variations and derivatives. Thus the first name "AMAR" has more than fifty of these, not to mention the varieties of its derivatives¹. In some cases the same man was notified to the Agency, either by himself, the captor State or the next of kin, under ten or twelve different names, without any possibility, at first sight, of knowing that it was one and the same person. An Arab mother felt very surprised that the Agency had not yet found her son, for whom she had made seven enquiries, each time under a different name!

To cope with the difficulties of filing and consequent errors, an exact "Table of Variations and Derivatives" of the chief Arabic names had to be established, allowing the merging of cards bearing the derivatives of a name under the chief name, corresponding to the "basic form".

¹ AMARA, AMARI, AMMAR, AMER, AMAIRI, AMERI, AMEUR, AMIR, AMIRI, AMIEUR, AMOR, AMORA, AMOUR, AMOURI, AMRI, AOMAR, AMAROU, AMROU, HAMAR, AOUMAR, AOUMEUR, HAMER, HAMERA, HAMERI, HAIMEUR, AHMAR, HAMOR, HAMOURA, HAMMOURI, HAMRA, HAMRI, HAMROU, HOMAR, HOMARI, LAAMAR, LAAMARA, LAAMARI, LAMOUR, LAMOURA, LAMOUIR, OUMER, OMAR, OMARI, OMEUR, OMEURI, OUMARI, AMRAOUI, HAMRAOUI, AMARA OUI, in addition, the many varieties of the derivatives MAAMAR, AMRANE and BOUAMAR.

Example : Under the chief name AMAR were merged the cards bearing the names AMARA, AMARI, HAMOURI, etc.

A similar table, but drawn up by rule of thumb, was also established to help in the filing of the names of negroes from West Africa and from French Equatorial Africa.

With the assistance of these working tools, the French Colonial Index reached such a degree of precision, that most of the data in it could be used ; it became, and still remains, a centralizing instrument, indispensable for the French civil and military government departments. To reach this degree of efficiency, no fewer than 800,000 cards had to be made out for a total of 60,000 PW and 20,000 missing notified to Geneva.

The subdivision by campaigns of the indexes built up after the fighting in 1939-1940 proved most useful. The index of " Free French Forces ", of which there could naturally be no duplicate in France during the occupation, was in particular of great interest. The Free French authorities in London often made use of its documentation, and the Colonial Section was able to supply them with many particulars, especially on the missing after the capture of Bir-Hacheim by the Axis forces in June 1942. About a thousand French colonial military personnel of all races were captured at the time in Libya and taken to Italy. When the latter capitulated, about 150 of these men found refuge in Switzerland, where they were interned.

As in the case of the other national Sections, the Colonial Section regularly sent to the administration concerned—in this instance the *Secrétariat d'Etat à la Guerre* in France—the official rolls communicated by the detaining authorities. In addition, it carefully noted throughout the whole of the war all particulars in these rolls, and was thus able to establish the card-indexes mentioned above. Under these conditions, it was thus possible to follow up the PW at each transfer, send them relief supplies, and within the shortest time possible, notify the various French departments. The Section even went the length of checking the mail of these men, to note where it came from, when in 1944 official German particulars practically ceased to reach Geneva.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Colonial Section being thus organized internally, it sought also to establish external contacts. Its first concern was to get into touch with the French Ministerial departments, the civil and military administration in North Africa, the Governments General in the Colonies and their representatives, the French Red Cross, the various relief committees and the occupation Authorities. As from 1941, it attempted to find correspondents in all countries to which its work extended.

The French administration being disorganized by the invasion, offices had to be opened in North Africa and the Colonies, in order to centralize all the information supplied by Geneva and to communicate it to the next of kin, which the Agency often had difficulty in reaching itself. These offices, working on the spot, were able to supply the required data to the Agency, and to help in searching for the missing and in identifying the dead.

As a rule these attempts were successful, and close and continuous contact was established with North and West Africa. Relations with Indo-China, Madagascar and the French West Indies were more difficult to set up owing to the breakdown of postal services, and were maintained only at the cost of constant effort.

Parallel to the card-indexes, two subdivisions were established to complete the organization of the Colonial Section: the *Secretariat* and the *Deaths Service*.

SECRETARIAT

Its task was to establish and to maintain by all means the link between the PW and his next of kin.

Illiteracy precluding all direct correspondence, there was no question of writing to a native as to an European. The authorities under whom he was, or the relief societies who helped him, had to serve as intermediaries. For the PW himself, this essential intermediary was the spokesman or the camp com-

mander; for the next of kin, it was the Red Cross or the administration of the country or area concerned.

Moreover, the PW often gave as an address only the name of the chief of the geographical subdivision (*caïdat*, *cheikh*, district) from which he came. Search had therefore to be made for the area in which these subdivisions were located; the messages for that area were grouped, and then sent to the civil or military administration, who undertook to deliver them. The duty of these officials was not easy, especially if the relatives were members of nomadic tribes. The answers were sent to the Colonial Section, who undertook to communicate them to the PW. The native, as a general rule, resents any European interference in his life, but he quickly grew to understand that it was nevertheless in his interest to write, or have someone write for him.

An average of 4,000 to 5,000 letters per month thus passed through Geneva from 1941, and increased steadily up to twice that figure in the following years. The natives became accustomed to the care of the ICRC, and brought the Committee all their problems to deal with. All these problems, from the gravest to the seemingly most trivial, were in fact studied and solved with the same care. Thus the morale of the PW was kept up during captivity and their interests safeguarded. Without always understanding what the Red Cross was, they called it "My dear Mother, Miss Geneva, Mr. Committee" and showed their gratitude in very touching fashion.

As from 1942, almost all the PW mail from native troops or addressed to them, passed through Geneva. To the mail for PW of 1939 and 1940, there was soon added mail from the men who had belonged to the Free French Forces, or who had, on the contrary, fought against the Allies. The former were PW in Italy, the latter in East Africa, the Middle East or the United States of America. The Committee's delegations abroad were then able to render the greatest service to the Colonial Section. They were used as postal relays, when war operations and the break-down of ordinary connections made it necessary. Contact was thus maintained by every means possible.

At a time when it was impossible to send on original letters,

extracts were listed. These lists were handed to delegates leaving on missions, or were sent in several copies and by different routes to the local authorities, who were responsible for communicating them to the next of kin.

Lastly, in 1942 and 1943, broadcasts were organized through the French Radio to give news of Indochinese PW to their relatives. The Colonial Section made up fifteen-word messages from the letters of these men to their families. These broadcasts were afterwards suspended by the occupation authorities in France, but were resumed in Geneva by the ICRC in 1945, thus giving rapid information to next of kin in Indochina of the liberation of the Indochinese repatriated through Switzerland.

In addition to transmission of PW mail, the Secretariat made more than 20,000 individual inquiries during the war (search for PW or service-men whose relatives were without news of them, matters of release, allowances, divorce, etc.). Each inquiry involved many steps, and called for the greatest care.

The matter of these inquiries, though not always belonging to the province of the ICRC, had nevertheless to be handled for various reasons; the most imperative of these was the disruption of communications between France and her Empire in 1942. The dispersion of French government services called for a coordinating body, and the Colonial Section was that body. The Ministry of War, in particular, constantly turned to it for help, since the records of the native regiments had been taken back to the colonies of origin in 1940.

A subdivision of the Secretariat, the "German Enquiries" service, had the exclusive task of handling correspondence with the OKW, the German Red Cross and the camp commanders. The extreme mobility of the labour detachments (to which most of the native prisoners were assigned and which were brought back from Germany to France in 1940, at the suggestion of the ICRC, on account of the more temperate climate), and the constant transfers of these men, which were not always notified to Geneva, necessitated a great many enquiries. Despite these movements, the location of the PW was followed up, as far as possible, and steps were taken that the Geneva Convention should be applied and the situation of the PW improved.

DEATHS SERVICE

This service, which began work in the beginning of 1941, undertook the task of looking for the missing who were presumed dead and of their identification. If requested by the French *Etat civil*, it saw to the notification of deaths to next of kin through the appropriate local authorities (Red Cross, civil or military administrations).

The work of the Deaths Service was all the more arduous and its responsibility all the greater, as investigations had to be conducted and identification to be carried out of dead, on whose bodies only the scantiest data had been found (piece of identity disc, number, sometimes a name). Use was made of inadequate or distorted information sent to Geneva by the German authorities or the local mayors : this was often merely the indication "unknown coloured man" or "unknown negro". These particulars were transcribed by the Section on cards, and were specially classified. The Deaths Service then subdivided its card-indexes according to the kind of data which reached it. Thus, there were set up in parallel fashion : an alphabetical index, an index based on countries and army numbers, and if the origin of the deceased was unknown, an index according to army numbers alone.

It may be added that all death notices, including those of PW, entailed additional investigation to ascertain the exact identity of the deceased ¹.

As to the missing about whom nothing was known, the Deaths Service undertook systematic investigations ; the most successful of these was the "regimental enquiry", which was already in use in the French Section.

The illiteracy of the natives prevented their giving personal information about their missing comrades : thus, the Section turned for evidence to their French officers and NCO, preferably those whose rank brought them into closest contact with their men. The following method was employed :

¹ In particular at the French "Bureaux liquidateurs".

(1) Lists of the missing who had belonged to the same company of the same regiment were made up :

(2) With the help of the Ministry of War and of the overseas General Staffs, a search was made for the surviving officers and NCO who had commanded these companies :

(3) Each of these officers—most of them were in captivity—received a list of the missing who belonged to their unit : they were asked to supply relevant information.

These regimental enquiries helped to clarify a large number of cases of missing ; through a system of cross-checking of the testimonies received, they made it possible to recognize the routes followed by the units during the fighting. By questioning the mayors of the communes situated along these routes, unsuspected burial places were discovered, and other identifications made. Thus, the anxiety of many families was relieved, and their legal position could be established. As an example, one investigation alone resulted in the discovery of 38 graves.

The Colonial Section also carefully listed the graves throughout all the communes of France where fighting had taken place, and thus built up an index of communes which proved an invaluable aid in its work.

The most reliable means of identifying the native who has no *état civil* is information from his regiment, and in particular, his army recruiting number. For this reason it was indispensable to work in cooperation with the military authority under whose orders he had been. A special working procedure was therefore adopted : the so-called " Shuttle lists ".

These were rolls bearing the names of missing combatants and the particulars available about them, arranged according to countries and regiments. They were drawn up by the General Staff in the country of origin and travelled back and forth between the Staff and Geneva, each of the parties proceeding meanwhile to make investigations, checking information with particulars already available and making notes on the lists at each passage, until the missing had been found and identified.

It should be pointed out that amongst these supposedly missing men, there were many natives who through laziness or for some other reason, had given no sign of life. Thus, in 1942, when 5,000 Tunisians were repatriated, 400 of them who had been reported as missing, landed safely in their country.

Other mistakes frequently occurred, as a result of native customs. For instance, a Moroccan who for some reason had sold or lent his coat or identity disc to a comrade, would never recover these articles from the dead body of the latter, because according to native belief, he who takes an article from the body of a man killed in battle will himself fall mortally wounded. In such cases, the inquirer was led completely astray, and the whole work of investigation and identification had to be done again.

Despite these difficulties, the majority of combatants who died on the battle-field or in captivity, and whose deaths had been notified to the Colonial Section, were identified. Thus identification was carried out for 80% of the Tunisians and 75% of the Moroccans.

Other lists, called "stateless", were established by the Section and were sent from land to land by the competent authorities of the various parts of the French Empire. They contained particulars about dead combatants whose origin was unknown, and the authorities named endeavoured to trace their own nationals.

Each of these tasks, of which the foregoing gives only a brief picture, entailed a considerable amount of investigation, checking, counter-checking and analysis.

From 1941, the Deaths Service was asked by the French *Etat civil* to notify the next of kin of the deaths of native troops which came to the Service's notice. This was done through the most appropriate channels in the countries of origin: the civil or military administration, the French Red Cross in North Africa, the Governments General or their representatives in the colonies. The number of deaths thus notified amounted to 15,149 during the war.

Besides being active from the beginning in this work of notification, the Deaths Service of the Colonial Section became an indispensable tool to the French agencies on the day when

France was completely severed from her Empire, i.e. in November 1942. For instance, a large number of native PW, released as unfit for military service, died in French hospitals between 1942 and 1945. The hospitals, which were no longer in a position to do so themselves, asked Geneva to communicate the deaths of these men to their next of kin. The same occurred in 1944, when the mortality among native PW in German hands increased considerably, as a result of the evacuation of the camps and air bombardments.

During this period, the Colonial Section was the sole link, not only between the government services in the home country and those in overseas territories, but also between these services or the next of kin, and the native PW. The Deaths Service then really took the place of the French *Etat civil* ; it established temporary records, and held in Geneva the original death certificates, of which photostats only were sent to the next of kin, because of the uncertainty of postal communications. The Section showed the greatest caution in communicating to occupied France the deaths of native Gaullist soldiers, or to the countries connected with the Free French Forces, those of natives enrolled in the *Wehrmacht*, since natives were associated with every phase of the conflict in which France had a part, and were found as prisoners of war in Kenya, South Africa, the U.S.A., Italy, and even as internees in Switzerland.

The Deaths Service of the French Colonial Section was thus led to extend its activities beyond the field of the Agency proper. The disorganization in France, which deprived that country of her means of action and her archives, made it impossible for her during the war to cope with the complex and intricate task of searching for and identifying the dead amongst the native troops. Without the initiative of the ICRC, a large number of these dead would have remained nameless and their next of kin would have lived on in uncertainty.

Amongst the documents preserved in the records of the Colonial Section, not the least moving are the acknowledgments of death notices from the most remote parts of the French Empire, simply signed with a mark or a finger-print.

* * *

When France was liberated, the management of the Colonial Section got into touch with the Ministries in Paris and other offices which would be able to continue the work undertaken in Geneva during the war. The Section realized that the latter were not yet in a position to do so, and the ICRC therefore decided to continue to assist them for some further time. During the period which followed, the Secretary for the Colonies used the documentation of the Colonial Section to make out the budget of pensions and of bonuses due to former Colonial PW, and the French Red Cross in Algeria consulted its records to complete its own.

Italian Section

The Italian Section was opened on June 20, 1940, ten days after Italy's entry into the war. From the winter of 1940-1941 onwards it was extremely active, and there was to be no decrease in its work up to the end of hostilities. Both on account of the volume of work handled and the number of its staff, this became one of the Agency's most important departments.

The trend of the military operations was not the only circumstance which influenced the growth of the Section and which caused it to be confronted by new duties and ever-increasing difficulties. Certain political events also reacted profoundly on its work. It will suffice to recall the critical and dramatic events in the summer of 1943, which led to the division of Italy into two hostile camps, to imagine the intricate nature of some of the problems encountered by this Section.

The year 1943, which marked a veritable turning-point in Italian history during the war years, similarly affected the life of the Italian Section during this same period and divided it into two distinct parts.

(1) The period from June 1940 to September 8, 1943, date of the armistice concluded between Italy and the Allied Powers. During these three years, Italy, under a single government, fought on the side of Germany against the Allies. This phase was marked by a military and political situation which was more or less clear.

(2) The period from September 1943, until the capitulation of the Axis forces in Italy on May 2, 1945, during which the situation was far more complicated. The occupation by the German Army of a large part of the country, and the decla-

ration of war on Germany by the Italian Government in the south, divided Italy into two hostile camps, separated from one another by the battle front. Whereas in the south, the forces which had remained under the Government's orders resumed the fight at the side of the Allies, in the north, the Neo-Fascist Republic was set up, with the object of continuing the war on the side of the Reich.

These two main phases, covering the period of hostilities were followed by the third, the post-war period. The task of the Italian Section in connection with the repatriation of Italian prisoners—which required several months for its accomplishment—and the identification of the dead, prolonged its work for more than two years after the end of the war.

I. FROM ITALY'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR (JUNE 10, 1940)
TO THE ARMISTICE WITH THE ALLIED POWERS
(SEPTEMBER 8, 1943)

During this phase the Italian Section's method of work had to be adapted to the directions given by the Fascist Government to the *Ufficio Prigionieri di Guerra* in Rome, the official information bureau set up by the Italian Red Cross. The UPG served throughout this period principally for the receipt of information sent by the Agency regarding members of the Italian forces captured by the enemy, those who had died in enemy hands, or interned Italian civilians.

During the early months of the war, the UPG was apparently hampered by these governmental instructions, and could not take full advantage of the data received from Geneva ; it was therefore unable to pass on prompt and accurate news to the next of kin. Those who know the very strong feelings of the Italian people in everything relating to family life will easily imagine the effect which this lack of news had upon the population. As they received no official notification, the relatives turned naturally to the Agency, which alone was able to relieve their anxiety ; the Italian Section was thus inundated with inquiries. Whenever it could supply the required information,

it did so. This great volume of correspondence between Italian families and the Agency was, however, remarked by the Italian authorities, who were opposed to it.

After discussion with the representatives of the UPG, the ICRC was obliged to cease replying direct to families when applications met with the first official information contained in the card index. From that time, the Italian Service sent the replies to such enquiries to the UPG, which had undertaken to transmit them to the families in their original form. At the same time, the UPG still acting on the Government's instructions, conducted a vigorous campaign to persuade the Italian people to address their applications direct to its offices, and not to the Central Agency. Finally, the Italian censorship simply returned all such letters to the senders, with the request that they address their inquiries to the official Bureau in Rome. After this, the UPG reserved to itself the right to apply to the Agency, in order to complete its own particulars, and charged it to convey enquiries to the detaining Powers concerning the fate of missing combatants, or of PW who had not written for a long time.

To give an accurate idea of the evolution of the Italian Section, the principal military events in Italy should be followed in chronological order.

Summer 1940,

From the first days of the war, the Italian Section enquired into the fate of Italian airmen reported missing in the Mediterranean, of Italian merchant seamen captured by the British forces, and of Italian civilians interned in Great Britain, the Commonwealth, or British mandated territories. Following on the signature of the Franco-Italian armistice of June 24, and up to the war with Greece, the British Commonwealth was the only remaining adversary of Italy.

At the end of June, and during July 1940, Italy suffered its first naval reverses in the Mediterranean. The Section at once received large numbers of applications from next of kin of the crews of the ships which had been sunk. The names of the

survivors captured by the British were telegraphed to Geneva. These wires gave only the surname and first name and rank of the PW ; in many cases the names were misspelt. The Section at once found itself confronted with very serious practical difficulties. Numerous enquiries had to be made, often by wire, in order to identify survivors and obtain some enlightenment regarding the missing. The Section then began the practice of questioning survivors regarding missing comrades.

In the summer of 1940 the Italian land forces started to attack on the confines of Libya and Egypt. They also advanced into British Somaliland, which they occupied. This was a brief period of relative calm for the Section, during which it was able to perfect its organization. From October 1940 onward, a series of naval battles took place in the Mediterranean and on October 28, 1940, Italy and Greece were at war.

The Greek Campaign (October 1940—April 1941).

The Italian forces, after initial successes, were thrust back by the Greek Army into Albanian territory, where bitter fighting ensued. Great numbers of Italians were taken prisoner. The Greek Red Cross, acting as the official information bureau, supplied Geneva with accurate and detailed PW lists, and sent thousands of messages addressed by the men to their relatives. The Italian Section, for its part, instituted yet more enquiries concerning the missing, wounded, and dead, supplied information and transmitted messages to next of kin.

In March 1941, German forces came into action on the Greek front, and shortly after the Greek Army capitulated.

Not all the Italian PW in Greek hands were released, however, when this happened. During the latter part of the hostilities the Italian officers had been removed to Crete, whence the British authorities took them to Egypt.

* * *

A large part of the Italian PW from the various theatres of war were assembled in Egypt, and afterwards transferred

to India, South Africa, Australia, or Great Britain. These removals began in 1940, and continued throughout 1941; they were pursued on an even greater scale in 1942.

The Committee's delegates in India, on their first visits to the camps, drew up lists of the Italian PW, and these were the first information received by the Agency regarding these men. Capture cards and official lists did not arrive until much later.

First British attacks in Cyrenaica

(December 1940—February 1941; November 1941—January 1942).

On December 9, 1940, the British forces attacked the Italians in the vicinity of the Egyptian border. The offensive continued until February 1941, and led to the occupation of the entire coast of Cyrenaica. In desert warfare, large numbers of PW are liable to capture as soon as the lines of communication are cut. At the end of December 1940, the first telegrams giving the names of Italian PW were received from the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, 2nd Echelon—the official British information bureau for the Middle East, opened in Cairo in October 1940¹.

There was a marked increase in the amount of information received in January 1941; during this period, the Italian Section received up to 120 telegrams in a single day, containing the names of over 10,000 PW. This information was at once dispatched to Rome, so that relatives might be informed without delay.

In order to gain a true idea of the amount of work devolving upon the Italian Section at this time, it must be remembered that these data had to be entered on cards, and the latter filed immediately, so that they might be checked with the applications for information on the index.

The cables from the official Bureau in Cairo gave neither the place, nor the date of birth of PW. These essential details were

¹ Up to this date, the Committee's delegation in Cairo had undertaken the task of collecting all available information concerning Italian PW, for transmission to the Agency.

forthcoming only when the Section received the "detailed lists" drawn up by the British authorities, and which confirmed and completed the telegrams. Unfortunately, the establishing of these lists was often delayed, owing to sudden large influxes of new PW. Postal communications were slow, and prolonged these delays still further. The information received by wire was passed on to enquiries with the necessary reservations; in the circumstances, the Section had to telegraph to Cairo for additional details in many doubtful cases. A great many enquiries were also undertaken to discover the fate of missing men whose names were not yet mentioned in the wires from the Middle East Bureau.

This Bureau kept Geneva regularly supplied with telegraphic information concerning the condition of sick or wounded PW in hospital, informing it when a sick PW was no longer "dangerously", but "seriously" ill, or vice versa. The Section sent all these data to Rome at once, likewise notifications of deaths wired to Geneva and subsequently confirmed through death certificates made out by the British authorities.

Whereas the Italian Section was concentrating all its efforts on these tasks, the first letter-bags from Italian PW to their families reached Geneva from Cairo. Up till then, mail from Italian PW in the Middle East had been held up in Egypt, as the postal authorities were unable to forward it to Italy. In the summer of 1941, the Committee's delegate in Cairo at last managed to send this mail to Switzerland, using for the purpose the special courier available to the delegation.

The Section at once took this opportunity to complete its records, and thus make up for the brevity of the original capture telegrams. The name and first name of PW writing the letter, his rank, PW number, and address in captivity, as well as his home address—a detail of particular importance for identification purposes—were entered on cards and filed. The work had to be done quickly, for there could be no delay in forwarding these letters to Italy. To deal with this extra task, the Section had to call on its staff to work overtime and arranged for night-shifts. During the next few months, more than 450,000 cards were thus filled in.

During the five years of the war, the Italian Section had to rely to a great extent on this method of establishing cards based on transit mail, in order to fill the gaps in its information, whenever official details were slow in arriving¹. The particulars thus gathered soon proved to be extremely useful as a means of reassuring applicants, for many of the messages addressed to next of kin were either lost, destroyed in bombardments, or endlessly held up by the censor. Further, as will be seen later, these cards were of great help in identifying the dead.

The second British offensive in Cyrenaica lasted from November 1941 to January 1942. Like the first campaign, it led to the capture of many Italian PW. But, since January 1941, the Italian Section had had other tasks besides that of concerning itself with Italians captured or killed in Libya.

The East African Campaign (Jan. 1941—Nov. 1941).

In January 1941, the British forces also launched an offensive in Eritrea. At the same time, they captured Italian Somaliland, liberated British Somaliland, and entered Abyssinia. In November 1941, the last Italian forces in East Africa, namely those in Gondar, laid down their arms.

The East African campaign meant a considerable increase in the work of the Section, because the forces involved were large and because many Italian civilians were resident in this area.

Serious material obstacles arose in connection with the armed forces. Postal services were extremely slow, and the Detaining Power had great difficulty, in these inaccessible regions, to arrange for information as to the number of PW and killed. At the beginning of the operations in East Africa, the task of establishing lists of Italian PW in the Sudan and Eritrea fell to the Middle East Bureau. Later an official Bureau was established in Nairobi (Kenya)², which undertook the

¹ Later, the Section resorted to this method when Germany refused to supply the names of Italian military internees (see below, p. 233).

² H. Q. 2nd Echelon, East Africa Command.

registration of PW¹. Later on, the military authorities in Kenya took over part of the PW, who up till then had been subordinate to Middle East Command. Thus, to trace Italians missing in East Africa, the Italian Section had to approach simultaneously the official Cairo Bureau, the Bureau in Nairobi, and even, in some cases, the Committee's Delegation in India, since some PW were sent to that country without being quoted in the "detailed lists".

The Italian Service soon had to deal also with Italian civilians. Direct communications between Italy and its East African possessions were cut. Accordingly, the Italian Red Cross asked the Agency to serve as intermediary for the forwarding of vast quantities of "civilian messages" to the settlers in East Africa. When these messages, with the reply, found their way back to Geneva, the Italian Section recorded on particular file cards the names and addresses of those sending replies. This was necessary, because many Italian civilians in East Africa had moved, owing to the military operations, and it was important to note their new addresses.

Thus, it was possible not only to keep track of these civilians, but also to trace the whereabouts of service-men reported as missing. The Italian settlers almost all belonged to the militia, and not to the regular army, and had with them in East Africa the usual militia kit. During the 1941 campaign, they were called up and enlisted in the regular armed forces. Thus, the confusion was often twofold: the enquiry from the official Bureau in Rome gave the Army number, whilst next of kin were looking for the same man under his former civilian address. Moreover, the British authorities classified the men in their lists (according as they were taken in uniform or in civilian dress), either as PW, in which case their Army number was given, or as "civilian internees", when, of course, they gave no information that could lead to their identification as members of the armed forces. Further, the British had left at liberty a certain number of Italians who were needed for carrying on the

¹ This Bureau, unlike the Cairo Office, did not announce captures by wire, but sent "provisional lists", followed later by "detailed lists".

public services. When the population of East Africa was finally evacuated, these Italians were often able to choose the manner of internment they preferred, by reverting to their uniform if they thought it advantageous to be treated as PW.

In these unsettled circumstances, the utility of the information gained in transit from the messages coming from East Africa will readily be imagined.

Later, the British authorities removed the greater part of the Italian population of East Africa to civilian internee camps in Eritrea, Kenya, Tanganyika and Rhodesia, and sent the Agency lists of all these persons. About 10,000 Italian women, children, and old people were repatriated to Italy in the course of 1942 and 1943.

To carry out these duties, the staff of the Italian Section had to be greatly increased ; between the end of 1940 and December 31, 1941, it rose from nine to 110 workers. In addition, the Section resorted increasingly to the services of the Auxiliary Sections working for the Agency in various Swiss towns.

The Russian Campaign (1941-1943).

The Italian Expeditionary Corps, which went into action in the Ukraine on August 7, 1941, suffered its first reverses in the month of December, from which time its losses were considerable.

The Italian Section was overwhelmed with enquiries ; but no information was forthcoming with regard to Italian PW taken in the U.S.S.R., and it was unfortunately unable to give next of kin any news. All the Section could do was to file these applications, little guessing how valuable they would prove to be, later on, for the purpose of identifying the dead ¹.

Spring and Summer of 1942.

From the military point of view, this period was characterized in Africa by the great offensive undertaken by the Axis forces, which was halted only at El Alamein, 90 kilometers from Alexandria, at the beginning of July.

¹ See below, p. 240.

During the first half of 1942, mass transfers of Italian PW took place within the British Commonwealth. The Italian Section had to deal with numerous lists referring to these removals.

Furthermore, naval warfare in the Mediterranean was intensified, and many ships of the Italian Navy and merchant marine were sunk, leading to an influx of enquiries concerning missing seamen.

It was not only the next of kin in the homeland who were anxious for news ; the PW likewise were worried by the lack of news from their families—the delays in the transmission of PW mail increased steadily— and were constantly appealing to the Agency, in an attempt to get information of some kind. These appeals became still more pressing when Italy began to experience heavy air bombardments.

The ICRC now succeeded in securing the extension to Italian PW of the system of “ capture cards ”, with retrospective effect. Hundreds of thousands of these cards then began to arrive in Geneva, and constituted a most valuable source of information for the Italian Section. Unhappily, illiterate PW entrusted to others the task of filling out their cards, with the result that the information given was often incorrect. Other PW were barely able to write ; their names were almost illegible and spelling mistakes plentiful. This made classification of the cards in the index a long and difficult matter.

From the Battle of El Alamein to the Armistice with the Allies
(Nov. 1942 to Sept. 1943).

At the end of October 1942, the British Eighth Army, after breaking through the Axis front at El Alamein, advanced into Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, and reached Tunisia in January 1943, taking large numbers of PW in the process.

Meanwhile, on November 8, 1942, the Allied landings took place in French North Africa, and were followed shortly afterwards by the appearance of Free French forces and the entry of Axis troops into Tunisia.

Up to that time, the Italian Section had, as a rule, dealings with only one group of Detaining Powers, the British Common-

wealth, which supplied it with information through five main official Bureaux ¹.

After the establishment of a combat zone in Tunisia the Section had dealings with two new Detaining States, the U.S.A. and Free France. Thus, the Italian PW were more than ever dispersed. In order to trace a man reported missing on the African front during this period, the Italian Section—failing receipt of official lists, which reached Geneva only after long delays—had to enquire in four different places: (a) the official Bureau in London, which listed the names of PW captured by the British First Army; (b) the official Middle East Bureau, in Cairo, which recorded the PW taken by the British Eighth Army; (c) the official Prisoner of War Information Bureau, in Washington; and (d) the French authorities in Algiers, through the intermediary of the Committee's delegation in that city.

The Italian Section had to adapt itself rapidly to the various methods of work employed by the Detaining Powers; at the same time, the sudden quickening of the pace of events called for ever-increasing efforts. Shiploads of Italian reinforcements were sunk before reaching the African coast, and large masses of Italian troops fell into hands of the Allies, following on the capitulation of the Axis forces round Tunis in May, 1943; the Allied offensive was resumed almost at once (capture of the islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa in June, and landing in Sicily on July 10).

As the number of PW and missing grew rapidly, a great mass of enquiries reached Geneva. As the result of Government prohibition to write direct to the Agency, the Italians made arrangements with relatives or correspondents in Switzerland and overseas countries to transmit their applications to Geneva.

Whilst the fight was raging in Sicily, the Fascist regime collapsed, on July 26, 1943. On September 3, Allied forces disembarked on the mainland in Calabria, and a few days later, on September 8, an armistice was concluded between the Italian Government and the Allied Powers.

¹ Prisoners of War Information Bureau, London; H. Q. 2nd Echelon, Cairo; East Africa Command, Nairobi; South African Red Cross, Johannesburg (acting as the official South African Bureau); Prisoners of War Information Bureau in Melbourne, Australia.

II. FROM THE ARMISTICE WITH THE ALLIED POWERS (SEPT. 8, 1943) TO THE CAPITULATION OF THE AXIS FORCES IN NORTHERN ITALY (MAY 2, 1945)

On the conclusion of the armistice, German forces occupied the greater part of Italy and disarmed the Italian units stationed in Italy, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and the Dodecanese. The Italian fleet succeeded—though not without loss—in reaching Allied ports, in accordance with the orders of the Government, now established in southern Italy.

After the creation of the Neo-Fascist State, the Germans proceeded to “screen” the disarmed Italian troops. Those who declared their willingness to serve the Neo-Fascist State were enlisted in the new army formed to fight against the Allies, whilst all the others were removed to internment camps in Germany, Poland, and the Balkans. Many Italian service-men had managed to get away and join their families during the confusion which followed the armistice, and the Germans organized a systematic search, to round up the able-bodied men for deportation to Germany as civilian workers.

The Problem of the Italian Military Internees (I.M.I.)

At first it looked as though the 700,000 Italian service-men interned by the Germans would be treated as PW, thus coming under the provisions of the 1929 Convention. The Italian Section actually received nearly 200,000 capture cards between Dec. 1943 and Jan. 1944. But no more came after that date. When the Committee's delegate expressed surprise at this silence, and asked for information concerning the situation of these men, the German authorities replied that they were not PW, but “military internees”, and that the question was an internal matter, to be settled direct between the German Government and the Neo-Fascist Republic. Consequently, the Committee's delegates were not allowed to visit the camps in which these men were interned.

Lengthy negotiations had to be undertaken by the ICRC, in order that the IMI, as well as the conscripted Italian workers, might at least be allowed to make use of the "civilian message" system to send news to their relatives. From February 1944, onwards, hundreds of thousands of these messages were received by the agency. Before transmitting them, the Italian Section rapidly took note of the information they contained, for recording in its files. This involved a considerable amount of work, but it enabled the Section to give reassuring news to the many Italian families who had been evacuated, owing to military operations and bombing, and whom Civilian Messages could not reach.

In January 1944 a separate Office was set up at the Italian Embassy, in Berlin¹. This Office refused to supply any information to the Agency, and gave it only to the Neo-Fascist Government. In July 1944, upon the urgent representations of the Committee's delegation in Berlin, the Office stated that there was a card-index in Verona containing the names of 300,000 interned Italian service-men, which it would place at the disposal of the Committee. The latter, however, never succeeded in procuring this information.

It should be remembered that, counting the 700,000 I.M.I., the volunteer civilian workers, and the conscripted workers, the Germans were holding in all nearly 1,300,000 Italians, i. e. three times the total number of Italian PW in Allied hands. The difficulties confronting the Italian Section, which was overwhelmed with applications and had at its disposal only the scantiest of details, will be readily understood.

During the summer of 1944, the I.M.I. were converted into civilian workers employed in war industries, or in the "Todt" organization; they had to work in the zones most exposed to Allied bombing. The death-rate among them was thus extremely high. The German authorities gave the Agency no official certificates concerning deaths². Generally speaking, the only

¹ "Militär- und Zivilinternierten-Betreuungs-Dienststelle".

² Notifications of deaths were sent by the Berlin office to Verona, and were not communicated to next of kin.

notice which the relatives received of these deaths were messages sent back from Germany and marked with a cross, or bearing simply the word "deceased". The Italian Section instituted enquiries through camp leaders, who at once supplied the required data concerning the deceased. The German authorities, observing this correspondence, ordered the camp commandants and camp leaders to furnish no information, except to the above-named office in Berlin.

Yet other tasks were soon to be laid on the Italian Section. The programme was already a heavy one, since it included the problem of the IMI, the enquiries concerning men missing in Tunisia and Sicily, and the following up of the movements of PW consequent upon their transfer from one Detaining Power to another.

Division of Italy into two Zones.

From September 1943, Italy was divided into two distinct zones—the Southern Zone, under Allied control, and the Northern Zone, in the hands of the German and Neo-Fascists forces. The boundary between these two zones gradually moved northward, as the Allies slowly progressed. At the beginning of the winter of 1943-1944, the front was in the neighbourhood of Cassino and the Sangro, where it remained during several months of bitter local fighting.

Because of this dividing line, the Agency was henceforward the only body able to act as intermediary between the two zones. Until the end of the war, the Italian Section maintained the contact between PW in Allied hands and their relatives in the northern Zone, and between the IMI and Italian workers in Germany, or in German-controlled territories, and their relatives living in the southern Zone.

The official Bureau in Rome was unable to communicate with the southern part of the country. Abandoning the position it had taken in 1941, it requested the Agency in January 1944, to transmit to families in southern Italy, through the municipal authorities, notifications concerning the deaths of Italians

killed on the Russian front, according to evidence furnished by their comrades returned from Russia.

In order to ensure the transmission of this information and, in general, of all the communications and messages addressed to the southern Zone and to PW in Allied hands, the ICRC instituted the following routing system:—from the German-controlled areas the mail travelled by post to Geneva, thence by truck to Marseilles. From here it was conveyed by one of the Committee's ships to Lisbon, where it was taken over by Allied military planes; these flew to Algiers, whence the mail travelled to its various destinations. When Naples was liberated, the Delegation in that city served as a relay station for the whole of southern Italy.

Mail for the northern zone and also for Germany and other parts of Europe under German control followed the same route, in the opposite direction.

The events of September 1943 led many Italians, both military personnel and civilians, to seek refuge in Switzerland. The Agency did its best for these persons also and took all steps to notify—as discreetly as possible—their families in Italy¹. The Italian Section did likewise for the families of members of the garrison in the Dodecanese, who had sought refuge in Turkey at this time.

Furthermore, at the close of the year 1943, about 60,000 Italian Jews were arrested for racial motives in Central and Northern Italy, and detained in Italian prisons and camps; they were deported afterwards to Buchenwald, Auschwitz, etc.² Enquiries poured in, but the Section received no information from the German authorities regarding these deportees. Many Italians were also arrested for political reasons and deported chiefly to the camps of Mauthausen and Dachau, and the Italian Section was kept in complete darkness concerning their fate.

Lastly, it should be recalled that many Italian service-men who had gone into hiding to escape internment by the Germans,

¹ Italians interned in Switzerland came under the Agency's "Swiss Internment Section", and not under the Italian Section.

² Several thousand Jews seeking to escape this menace sought refuge in Switzerland.

as well as civilians who had managed to avoid enlistment in labour battalions, and young men of the 1923, 1924 and 1925 classes, called up by the Neo-Fascist Army, had joined the underground movement, thus swelling the ranks of the Resistance Forces which had been formed in the German-occupied zone. The Italian Section received no particulars concerning the fate of these "partisans", who fell into the hands of the Germans, and thus was unable to give any news to relatives.

The front, which was stationary since January 1944, was in motion again in May of the same year, and on June 4 the Allies entered Rome.

In December 1943, the Neo-Fascist Government had set up a second official Information Bureau at Aprica (province of Sondrio), in Northern Italy, which began work shortly after the fall of Rome. On July 1, 1944, this Bureau asked to be treated by the ICRC on the same footing as the Bureau remaining in Rome, and wished to receive copies of all communications sent to Rome by the Agency. Obviously, this system of duplicating all communications added greatly to the work of the Italian Section, which was now beginning to receive numerous enquiries and applications for information from the Aprica Bureau.

Meanwhile, the Allies had liberated the greater part of France. Italians serving with German units in France or conscripted by the "Todt" organization to work on the coastal fortifications, were taken by the Allies¹. The Italian Section received lists of men taken prisoner by regular French troops, by the F.F.I., and by British or American forces.

At this time the American and British authorities, wishing to make the best use of Italian labour for the benefit of the Allied war effort, proposed that these Italians should be granted the status of "co-operators", which gave them considerable advantages. Thus, lists of "co-operators" in France, the U.S.A., Great Britain, the Middle East, etc. began to reach the Italian Section.

¹ Among these men enlisted in the "Todt" organization were many former IMI.

The Allied advance in Italy, which progressed rapidly during the summer of 1944, slowed down in October, and the front remained stationary during the winter months along a line passing south of Spezia and Bologna. Italy was now divided into three sections :

(a) The southern zone, namely Central and Southern Italy, under Allied control.

(b) The fairly extensive zone which included the fighting area and the rear on either side. This entire region was quite inaccessible as regards correspondence and the transmission of news.

(c) The northern zone controlled by the Germans.

In April, 1945, the front was again in movement, and after a few weeks of fighting the German forces in Italy capitulated on May 2.

Throughout the entire Italian campaign, the Section had to follow the progress of operations with the greatest care, in order to find the most suitable routes for forwarding mail to the various zones.

By the summer of 1944, the Section reached its peak ; its staff, which numbered 158 workers on June 30, 1944, still stood at 129 on April 30, 1945.

Before dealing with the post-war period, it should be mentioned that, throughout the war, the Italian Section was called upon to enter upon numerous enquiries and investigations relating to civilians who were free. Italian emigration has led to the formation of numerous large colonies of Italians in various parts of the world, particularly in North and South America. Members of these colonies, cut off from their native country and deprived of news of their relatives, frequently applied to the Agency to trace members of their family whom their messages had failed to reach.

III. POST-WAR PERIOD. — REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEAD

Repatriation of Prisoners

The advance of the Allied armies through Germany and Austria in 1945 led to the release of former IMI. These the Germans had gradually been transferring from the east towards the west, in the face of the advancing Soviet forces. These men remained, however, during many months in the hands of the occupying authorities, and their repatriation, which was considerably delayed owing to the destruction of railways and bridges, began only in the autumn of 1945. The Agency tried to relieve the anxiety of relatives by broadcasting the names of the released, as well as those of former deportees who had survived the concentration camps.

The repatriation of the Italian from overseas took even longer, owing to the scarcity of shipping. Postal services were still irregular and slow in many areas, and both relatives and PW continued to write to Geneva for news.

In the summer of 1945, the Agency considered that the Allied Authorities would now be able to transmit information concerning PW direct to the official Italian Bureau, and decided to abandon the work of indexing the particulars taken from the lists of repatriates. The work of the Section thus gradually decreased. Nevertheless, eighteen months after the end of hostilities, the number of men awaiting repatriation was still nearly 200,000. We need feel no surprise, therefore, that the Section had to pursue—on a reduced scale, naturally—its various work for PW and internees. It was, in particular, concerned about the Italians taken by the Yugoslav forces. Lists showing the names of some 10,000 PW arrived from Belgrade at the end of 1945, and the Section passed on this information to next of kin.

Identification of the Dead

As was stated above, the deaths of Italian military personnel and civilian internees in Germany were not notified to the Agency. After the war, however, the official Italian Bureau received from various sources a great many notifications of this kind. As, however, the information given was for the most part incomplete or incorrect (names misspelt, address of next of kin omitted, etc.), the Bureau asked the Italian Section for help in the difficult task of identifying the dead.

The Section agreed to this request, and reverted to the cards made out when the IMI messages to next of kin passed through the Agency in transit, and also to the cards based on letters or messages addressed to IMI and returned from Germany with a cross, or the word "deceased". Finally, all the various kinds of information assembled in its files was scrutinised. By the end of 1947, the Section had succeeded in identifying and supplying the home address of 90% of the cases submitted to it.

Further, the official Bureau in Rome had received from Italians repatriated from Russia statements concerning the death of some of their fellow PW. Such evidence rarely included the address of the families. While there was no official information concerning men who had fallen, or who were captured in Russia, the Section had kept a card-index of all the applications for information received since 1941. The relatives' address was noted on these cards; this information was passed on to the Rome Bureau, and the latter was thus enabled in a great many cases to get in touch with the next of kin.

During more than two years after the end of hostilities the Italian Section, working in close co-operation with the official Bureau continued this work of identification. This task was indispensable, firstly, to put an end to the suspense of the dead men's relatives, and also in order to settle the latter's legal and financial status.

* * *

Technical difficulties encountered by the Italian Section.

After this review of the principal phases of the Section's activities, we can examine more closely some of the technical difficulties met with in connection with the identifying of PW and deceased.

One of the main obstacles arose from the system of military numbering used in the Italian Army. In Italy, each military district (recruiting centre) had its own military recording and numbering system. Each man's identity disc bore his individual number, preceded by a number, in brackets, representing the district. Thus, two men from different districts might have the same individual number. If the district was not mentioned in the particulars furnished to the Agency, or in the applications received, the individual number, in cases of duplication of names and in the absence of any other data, was worthless as a means of identification. Moreover, the military districts had destroyed their archives after 1943, at the approach of the enemy; thus, there was no means of verifying registration numbers at the recruiting centres.

The PW registration number might to some extent have served in place of the Army number, but was hardly more reliable. To take the case of transfers alone, the lists reaching Geneva gave only the name, first name and PW number of the men to be transferred; the numbers were frequently wrong or interchanged. These men were given new numbers in their new place of detention, since each area—in the British Commonwealth, at least—had its own numbering system. Lists announcing the arrival of PW in a new detention zone, but giving only the new PW number and not the former number, made it frequently impossible to identify the men until the more detailed lists had been forwarded. The Section was thus obliged to institute enquiries in all urgent cases ¹.

¹ Some Italian PW in Allied hands even exchanged numbers with others, in the hope of being transferred to another area or, on the contrary, to avoid such transfers. The men were informed of these transfers not under their names, but under their PW numbers.

As both the Army number and the PW number proved unreliable as a means of distinguishing namesakes, the Italian Section attached particular importance to the names and addresses of parents or wives. Here again, many difficulties arose.

For instance, it is a common practice in Italy for a married woman to sign letters with her maiden name, without mentioning her husband's name. Since women writing to Geneva often quoted only the first name of the son or husband for whom they were enquiring, the resulting complications can easily be imagined.

Again, dialects are still in frequent use in Italy, and relatives often employed such dialects in making their requests. Family names and place names were often so distorted as to be unrecognizable. The PW likewise, on their capture cards, frequently gave information which was just as inaccurate. The official lists themselves were drawn up on the basis of forms filled in by the PW and often reproduced these mistakes.

As an instance of the degree of similarity which sometimes occurred between identifying elements, we may mention that the Section received one day an enquiry concerning a serviceman for whom the card index gave two different PW addresses. The Section enquired in order to find out which of the addresses was correct. It was then discovered that there were in reality two men, each having the same name and first name, born on the same day of the same year in the same town of Sicily, and whose fathers, both living in the same town, had the same first name. The two men, moreover, belonged to the same unit, and were captured on the same day in the same battle. It was only thanks to their mother's name that they could be distinguished.

From this it will be seen that even the mention of the father's first name—a matter of paramount importance in Italy—may not suffice to identify a man with certainty, and that indication of the mother's maiden name and first name—likewise of great importance—then becomes the sole determining factor.

If identification of the living was often difficult, that of the dead was still more so. The Italian Section did not overlook any possible source of information in this field, and thus began the practice of examining the personal belongings of Italian

soldiers killed in battle, or of deceased PW, which the official Bureaux of several detaining States had sent to the Agency. In view of the increasing uncertainty of means of transport, it had been decided at the end of 1943 to keep these articles in trust at Geneva until the end of the war. Thanks to the careful scrutiny of all this property, the Italian Section succeeded in identifying a great many of the dead, and was thus able, through the official Italian Bureau, to inform next of kin, who otherwise might perhaps have remained in doubt for several years more.

The Italian Section's card index of casualties was in all respects a valuable source of information for the official Bureau in Rome, and the latter constantly referred to it to supplement its own data.

Greek Section

The outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Greece on October 28, 1940, made it necessary for the Central Agency to set up a Greek Section. It began work early in November.

At first, the duties of the Greek Section were to collect and send on to the Greek Red Cross, which was serving as the Greek Information Bureau, details of Greek PW captured in the winter and spring of 1940-1941, and of civilians interned in Axis territory. An armistice was concluded on April 23, 1941 and during the four years that followed when Greece was occupied by Italian, German and Bulgarian forces the Section dealt with the various classes, military and civilian, of persons who had been captured or detained ; it acted as intermediary for messages, and in response to requests made a great many enquiries.

The number of PW was relatively small. It will be recalled that the Greeks kept the initiative during the winter campaign of 1940-41, and that the troops surrounded in Epirus and Macedonia, who surrendered on April 23, 1941, were set free, in fulfilment of the terms of the armistice concluded with the Wehrmacht at Salonica. Further, prisoners from the Ionian Islands and, on this account, considered to be prospective Italian nationals, were also released. In the same way, release was given to those who came from territory claimed by Bulgaria.

A great number of Greek officers and men left Greece secretly at the beginning of the occupation to join up with the Allied forces in the Middle East. Greek units were formed which took part, for example, in the Libyan campaign. The Greek Section had the work of tracing men from these units who fell

in action, were taken prisoner or were missing. The Greek Navy also left Greek waters at the time of the occupation, to place the fleet at the disposal of the Allies. That led later to the capture of Greek sailors, particularly in Africa and the Far East. Numbers of Greeks who lived in France, Great Britain or the United States enlisted in the forces of these countries and fought on various fronts, in particular the Western Front in 1944. That fact explains the presence of Greek PW in German camps.

When the armistice was signed in September 1943, between Italy and the Allies, a great many Greek prisoners were transferred by the German army from camps in Italy to others in Germany. A few hundreds, however, managed to escape to Switzerland, where they were interned. Events that followed in Italy brought a steady flow of enquiries to the Central Agency from PW's next of kin, who were without news.

A great part of the Greek Section's activities concerned men of the Greek Merchant Service, which sailed all the seas. Before the war, the Greek merchant marine numbered over 600 vessels, totalling nearly two million tons ; also many vessels sailing under other flags had Greek crews. The Section received a great many enquiries regarding these seamen, and this led to an exchange of correspondence with the British and American Red Cross Societies. To aid the searches, a card index was set up for all vessels manned by Greek crews. The cards recorded all information received on the vessels concerned, the names of members of the crews who were the subject of enquiry, the steps taken for tracing them and the replies received. By referring to the crew lists contained in the index, the Section was frequently able to open an enquiry on a missing seaman in the home port where one of his comrades was known to be. This index of ships was, in every respect, an invaluable aid to the work in the Section.

The political detainees in the hands of the occupying forces and the civilian workers did not involve much work for the Section ; the Greek Jews, on the other hand, were a source of much concern. The greater number of these Jews lived, before the war in Salonica, where they formed a large colony. During

the war, almost all Greek Jews were deported, and the Section received over 8,000 enquiries. Corresponding requests were sent to the German Red Cross as to the fate of these deportees, but with one or two exceptions the enquiries proved fruitless.

* * *

All enquiries made in Greece were forwarded by the Section to the Greek Red Cross Society, acting as the official Information Bureau, and to whom all praise is due for the scrupulous care which they gave to this arduous task. In turn, the Greek Red Cross transmitted a great many enquiries from Greece to the Central Agency. The joint efforts of the two organizations were helped by the presence in Geneva of a permanent delegate of the Greek Red Cross.

It may be said that it was not the number, but the difficulty and intricacy of the enquiries that characterised the task of the Greek Section. Owing to the fact that the Detaining Powers were also the occupying Powers, enquiries of a simple nature could be dealt with locally.

During the occupation, the Greek Section was indeed a link between Greece and the numerous colonies of Greek nationals in many parts of the world, in particular Constantinople, Egypt, South Africa, the United States, the Argentine, Australia, and a constant interchange of enquiries passed through Geneva.

All civilian messages concerning Greek seamen were sent to the Greek Section from the Civilian Message Section. The Greek Section, with the aid of its card index of ships, was alone able to send on the messages. It also sorted all civilian messages for Greece in geographical order, according to the zones of occupation. In many cases, the messages only bore the name (sometimes mutilated) of a small village, a district or street of a town unnamed, and only persons familiar with the language and geography of the country were able to complete the addresses.

Whereas geographical difficulties were frequent in the Greek Section, the language question was a still greater obstacle. As the cards could not be made out in Greek script, the Section had

recourse to an exact method of transcribing names in Latin characters and adopting special filing methods. The only means of transcribing, filing and tracing cards, without risk of error or duplication, was by using these methods, devised by a specialist in Modern Greek. The principal organizations with which the Greek Section was in contact, in particular the Greek Red Cross, adopted this system of transcribing names.

Further difficulties were due to the phonetic spelling of Greek names by correspondents in Italy and America. The first step to be taken was to give these names the standard spelling. For instance "HALCHIDIS" and "CUCIUMPIS" (Italian spelling) had to be altered to "CHALKIDIS" and "KOUTSOUMBIS", and "CHAKOUS" and "QURKUVASELES" (American spelling) were rectified as "TSAKAOS" and "KOURKOUVASSILIS".

These examples show the custom adopted by many emigrants to adapt their names to the countries where they settle. A great many Greeks in the United States simplified their names by abbreviation, "Americanization" or translation¹. As an instance of the difficulty caused by this practice, we mention the case of a PW who signed "Tom ESLER" but who wrote to explain that his real name, in Greek, was "Anastassios ASLANIS".

Throughout the war the mail in this Section was precarious. Postal communications between Geneva and Greece were cut off, and although the Section took advantage of all means open to the ICRC, it frequently occurred that weeks, and even months passed by without mail being received from, or sent to Greece.

Members of the Greek Section were not many in number, the average staff during the War years was five, the highest figure being nine in 1944; their work quickly decreased at the end of the War and finished in 1946.

¹ See page 105.

Yugoslav Section

The Yugoslav Section was opened on May 1, 1941, after the war had extended to Yugoslavia. Owing to the general trend of hostilities in that country it was impossible for the Section to act regularly as an intermediary for the transmission of official information. Its role was therefore chiefly that of an agency for the exchange of news between next of kin.

At the outset, the Yugoslav Section was faced with a complex situation. After a brief resistance, the Yugoslav army capitulated on April 17 before the Axis Powers¹, and the country was totally occupied by the enemy. In addition to the German and Italian zones of occupation, there were Hungarian and Bulgarian zones. The frontier areas had been annexed, and what remained of Yugoslavia was divided into two new States: "Free Croatia" and the "Serbian State". Moreover, the former Government had sought refuge abroad.

During the first period of its existence, the Section received a great number of capture cards from Germany, and PW lists from Italy; by the end of 1941, it was in possession of the names of most of the Yugoslav PW held by these two States.

As Yugoslavia was now completely cut off, the Section at once received from practically every quarter of the globe applications relating to combatants presumed to be PW in Axis hands, and concerning civilians resident in Yugoslavia. It therefore soon had to undertake enquiries with the appropriate national Red Cross Societies, and here the difficulties began.

As a result of the situation to which the country was reduced,

¹ The attack by the Axis Powers began on April 6.

there were no less than seven national Red Cross Societies whom these investigations might concern: the German, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Albanian Red Cross Societies, and two temporary bodies, the Serbian Red Cross in Belgrade and the Croatian Red Cross in Zagreb. Lastly, a Yugoslav Red Cross Committee had been set up in London.

The Section had only vague and incomplete indications as to the extent of the territories in which each of these organizations could work, as information was confined to occasional reports published in the press. These territories were, moreover, constantly changing¹. It was extremely difficult to determine exactly which of the national Red Cross Societies was competent for any given place. In many cases, letters addressed to small localities situated in ill-defined frontier areas were returned to Geneva by the Red Cross Societies of the two neighbouring occupants, both stating their inability to deal with such mail.

Moreover, in spite of every attempt, a large number of PW were never able to obtain news of their relatives in Yugoslavia. There were several reasons for this: firstly, the constant displacement of the guerillas and of their activities, particularly in Croatia, which prevented all postal connections; secondly, the persecutions inflicted on the Serbian population in Croatian territory, which led to the exodus of the inhabitants towards Serbian areas under German occupation. Lastly, the deportation of populations and the transfer of civilian workers, which defeated every attempt at obtaining news.

We can here give only a faint idea of the constant difficulties with which the Yugoslav Section had to contend in carrying out enquiries. The following schedule of enquiries carried out since its opening shows, however, that positive results were achieved in many instances.

¹ The situation was as follows: Germany had annexed part of Slovenia with Maribor, and occupied a large extent of Serbia, including the Banat. Italy had annexed the rest of Slovenia with Ljubljana, and a large portion of the Yugoslavia coastline with Susak, Split, Sibenik, etc. She occupied a considerable part of the new Croatian State behind the coastline, together with Montenegro. A part of Yugoslav Macedonia

Object of search	Number of enquiries from 1. 1. 41 to 30. 6. 47	Positive results
Service Men and Civilian Internees	6,414	1,463
Sundry Civilians (deported, non-interned civilians, etc.)	13,144	5,390
Total . . .	19,558	6,853

By July 1941, a new element had entered the picture : resistance movements appeared, followed shortly by the reconstitution of organized armed forces. These at once attacked the forces of the occupant and of the Croatian State. The engagements led to fresh captures and more deaths amongst Yugoslav combatants.

After the armistice concluded in September 1943 between Italy and the Allies, the German forces disarmed and interned Italian forces stationed in Yugoslavia. Dalmatia was attached to the Croatian State, and the remainder of the Yugoslav provinces, which had been annexed or occupied by the Italians, came under German occupation.

* * *

To a greater extent than for PW, the fate of civilian internees, deportees and displaced civilians was a concern to the Section ; in this field its means of action were extremely limited.

The areas of Yugoslavia where the populations suffered most severely by collective deportation were Serbia and Slovenia ; a fair proportion of the population of the latter district had been taken to Germany. The Section was also informed of the existence in Norway of civilian internee camps, where a large number of Yugoslav partisans had been deported.

The Agency never received any lists of internees or deportees from German sources, and the attempts of the Section in behalf of these civilians were unavailing. The difficulties in respect of

had been attached to Albania and, like the latter, occupied by Italy. Hungary had annexed the Medjumurje and the Backa. Bulgaria, in turn, had occupied a portion of Eastern Serbia and the larger part of Yugoslav Macedonia.

the internees held by the Croatian authorities were likewise very great. These authorities considered such internees as political prisoners, and the Section never received any lists of the Croatian camps, the existence of which came to their knowledge only through letters from relatives. Practically complete lists were however received from the Italians, towards the end of the war.

Although, at the outbreak of war, Yugoslavia despite its 15 million inhabitants included only 70,000 Jews, the Section received a large number of enquiries from Jewish next of kin in all parts of the world. Enquiries about Jews residing in the provinces occupied by Germany were unfortunately always fruitless.

Three Jewish camps were known to be situated in Serbia. The detainees, who had been quartered there temporarily, were afterwards taken to an unknown destination, and nothing further was ever heard of them. In addition, a large number of Jews interned in Croatia were deported to Auschwitz, Kattowitz and other concentration camps. No news was ever received from them again.

* * *

In August 1944, as a result of steps taken by the ICRC with the German Authorities, lists of Yugoslav prisoners in the camps in Germany were drawn up by the spokesmen and sent to Geneva. Most of these lists were received by January 1945, but the remainder never arrived, in consequence of the situation in Germany.

At the end of 1944, postal connections were established anew between the Agency and the Yugoslav Red Cross in Belgrade, via Marseilles and Rome. Thousands of messages addressed to PW in Germany, and which had been sent off before the liberation, then reached the Section.

From May 1945, after the liberation of Yugoslavia and the establishment of fresh postal connections with Belgrade, the work of the Section diminished considerably.

As the PW and deportees could not be repatriated immediately after the armistice, lists of about 18,000 Yugoslav PW and civilian deportees who had been liberated by the Allied

forces were broadcast to their relatives and friends, by means of the ICRC broadcasts, for which the Yugoslav Section had to make arrangements.

From the autumn of 1946, the chief task of the Section was to draw up and despatch certificates of captivity to former prisoners of war.

The filing of the Yugoslav card-index was beset with difficulties. These were mainly caused by the mixture of Cyrillic and Latin characters in the original documents, in particular the capture cards, and the juxtaposition of Serbo-Croat, German and Italian spellings. Distortion of names, which was very frequent, did not make the task of the filing-clerks any easier. Strict observation of precise filing rules, which had been drafted in a handbook prepared by specialists of the Serbo-Croat language, enabled these difficulties to be overcome.

When the work was at its peak, the personnel of the Section amounted to fifteen.

Russian Section

Despite the fact that the USSR had only ratified the Geneva Convention for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded and was not amongst the States which had signed the 1929 Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, the day after the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia the ICRC informed the Government of the Soviet Union that it was fully prepared to collect and transmit information on the wounded and on PW on the Eastern front. The USSR accepted this proposal in principle as regards PW, and declared its willingness to supply information on PW captured by Soviet forces, in so far as the States at war with the USSR observed the same rule.

The countries at war with Russia, to whom the ICRC made the same proposal, gave a reply similar to that of the USSR. Subsequently, the Soviet Government also agreed to the Committee's scheme to open an office in Ankara for receiving and relaying information on PW on behalf of the Central Agency. A delegate of the Committee got into touch with the Soviet Embassy in Turkey to make this arrangement¹. It was thus hoped that, in respect of exchange of information, men captured on the Eastern front would have the benefit of the Committee's help. The Central Agency, therefore, installed the Russian Section on September 1, 1941.

In October and November 1941, the ICRC transmitted to the Soviet Government, by the intermediary of its delegate in Ankara and of the Soviet Embassy in that town, the first lists

¹ For details on these negotiations see Vol. I, Part III, chap. 11.

of Russian PW which had meanwhile reached the Central Agency, but the Moscow Official Bureau, the establishment of which the Soviet Embassy in Ankara had announced, forwarded no list of PW in Russian hands in exchange. The majority of the States at war with Russia argued that failure of reciprocity released them from any obligation and ceased to forward names of Russian PW to the Agency.

The contact established in this field between the Committee and the Soviet authorities was thus interrupted, and the hope that the Agency might act as intermediary for exchange of news between prisoners taken on the Eastern front and their next of kin gradually faded.

The Russian Section was therefore in a peculiar position. As no information arrived from official sources, its scope was very limited. Also, it remained out of touch with the Moscow Official Bureau. It, nevertheless, kept up a certain activity ; this was due mainly to the fact that the Rumanian Government continued to send lists of Soviet prisoners in its hands. About 75,000 names came in from Rumania, and apparently covered the total number of Russian PW in that country. Other countries at war with the USSR sent the names of 4,500 Russian PW taken by them ¹.

The Section received information from other sources which, while less important, nevertheless proved very valuable, on account of the silence surrounding the fate of Soviet prisoners. The following among these sources may be mentioned :

(1) A certain number of Russian prisoners who had escaped from Germany and Italy into Switzerland and who gave the names of comrades still in captivity ².

(2) Messages sent to relatives by PW, mostly from Finland, and some from Rumania and Italy.

¹ 3,000 names were sent in by the Finnish authorities, 914 by the Italians, 348 by the Germans, 250 by the Hungarians.

² Over 8,000 Soviet military personnel were interned in Switzerland (escaped PW from German and Italian camps). Their cases came within the duties of the Internment Section.

(3) Various Red Cross Societies and administrative bodies, which occasionally furnished information on PW and on men who had died.

It should further be mentioned that a certain number of Soviet prisoners in Germany were enlisted, voluntarily or under compulsion, in the German army or in special units fighting with it. Some of these men were captured by the Allies and their names then appeared on lists of German PW sent by the official bureaux of the Allied Powers to Geneva.

The Russian Section received only a very small number of enquiries concerning military personnel. Most of the requests came from persons who lived outside Russia, or in Soviet territory occupied by the enemy: very few applications came from unoccupied Russia.

The enquiries the Section was asked to make were lodged with the Finnish, Rumanian, German Red Cross Societies, and in some cases with the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. The only response to these applications came from the Finnish and Rumanian Red Cross Societies. The German Red Cross stated it would reply direct to the inquirer, if contact could be made with the applicant.

* * *

Almost all information relating to civilian internees received by the Section concerned escaped PW interned in Switzerland. These civilian internees, like the military, were the care of the Internment Service. The Russian Section merely looked after their mail and their requests for enquiries.

Of the civilian internees outside Switzerland, the Agency received only a few hundred names, mostly from the Committee's delegations in various countries, the Red Cross Societies in detaining States and some internees themselves or their next of kin.

The Agency pursued a certain number of enquiries, most of which were sent to the Committee's delegations, and to the

Italian and German Red Cross Societies. The information gathered by these means was very scanty.

Many more enquiries were made concerning free civilians than about civilian internees or military personnel. The majority of the free civilians sought were Jews who had numerous relatives and friends resident abroad, in particular in Palestine. As most of these persons were resident in Russian territories occupied by the Axis forces, it was scarcely possible to make enquiries about them. It was only as these territories were gradually liberated that the Section was able to send messages to them. Many messages were returned with the remark: "Gone away", "Unknown", "Incomplete address". A tenth part only was returned with replies from the person concerned, from neighbours or from the Soviet (house committee) of their former dwelling.

* * *

The Section encountered two difficulties of a purely technical nature; to overcome them it had recourse to the services of a staff with a perfect knowledge of the Russian language and script, and able to spend a considerable amount of time on certain work.

The first difficulty was the fact that names in lists or on enquiry forms were usually written by persons ignorant of the Russian language and script. The names were generally written in Latin characters and had thus undergone mutilation, as some Russian characters have no Latin equivalent. The Section's index cards were made out in Russian characters. It was therefore necessary to rewrite in Russian characters all names appearing in documents. Without indication of the system used for the transcription of the names, this task was not always an easy one ¹.

The other difficulty lay in the fact that messages had to be transmitted to the USSR at a time when the western and south-western territories of the country were occupied by the

¹ Finland alone indicated the system of transcription used.

Axis forces. Each address therefore had to be checked in order to determine whether the message should be sent to the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Moscow, or to the National Red Cross Society of one of the USSR's adversaries. As the greater number of the messages had to go to villages, such research often took a very long time.

Czechoslovak Section

At the outset of hostilities the Agency had set up two separate sections within the so-called "Grouped Countries" Section: the Czech and the Slovak Sections. These two Sections existed side by side until the reconstitution of the Czechoslovak State, in May 1945, when they were amalgamated to form a National Czechoslovak Section.

It will be recalled that the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, in March 1939, by the German forces and the constitution of Slovakia as an independent State, completed the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and temporarily put an end to its existence. Bohemia and Moravia were annexed by the Reich and were constituted a "Protectorate"; the inhabitants of these areas therefore did not become German, and the men were not liable for military service ¹.

In these circumstances, when hostilities broke out in September 1939, the countries of the Protectorate were not involved in the war. A few of their nationals, however, enlisted in the belligerent forces. As regards Slovakia, this country entered into the war in June 1941 against the U.S.S.R. and sent two divisions to the Eastern front. It is clear from the above why there were relatively few Czechoslovak prisoners of war.

In the course of the war a certain number of Czech volunteers in foreign armies were taken prisoner. Germany considered

¹ Former Czechoslovak nationals belonging to the German minorities resident in territories annexed by the Reich in consequence of the Munich agreement were naturally enrolled in German units. Those taken prisoner were therefore dealt with by the German Section.

Captured members of the Hungarian minority were dealt with by the Hungarian Section.

them as nationals of the country they had been serving, and transmitted their names to the Agency. The latter was able, in particular, to send the competent authorities in Great Britain information on Czech prisoners who had fought in the British forces, and who were PW in Germany. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. sent the Agency no information on Slovak military personnel captured by the Soviet forces. The Agency set enquiries on foot in response to requests for information on men who were missing on the Eastern front, but no replies were received.

The Agency received no information on Czechoslovak combatants who fought in the Soviet forces and were captured by the Germans. It was only when the war had ended that it learned of the existence of these particular PW.

The activity of the Czechoslovak Section in behalf of civilians was even more restricted than for military personnel. The Section was indeed able to be of service to the few Czechoslovak nationals interned in certain countries, or who simply had no news of their relatives because of the interruption in postal communications. On the other hand, it could accomplish hardly anything in the search for information on tens of thousands of deportees, many of whom died in the concentration camps. Only 1,500 names of deportees in Theresienstadt (Terezin) reached the Section in 1944 on receipts for relief parcels the ICRC had despatched to this place.

American Section

The American Section was set up on December 9, 1941, when the United States became involved in the conflict. The U.S. Forces having in general initiated operations, except at the beginning of the war in the Philippines and in the Pacific Islands, the number of American prisoners was small. The American Section, therefore, never went through the periods of improvisation and of mass arrival of data, in the way experienced by certain other Sections of the Agency. It also had the benefit of past experience and was thus in a position to meet requirements at all times without much difficulty.

The Prisoners of War Information Bureau of the Office of the Provost Marshal General in Washington, and the American Red Cross, who worked in close co-operation and were remarkably well organized, served as an efficient information bureau for American next of kin and considerably lightened the Agency's task. The American Section was thus able to give the whole of its attention to the business of sending on information on PW received from Detaining States to the Official Bureau in Washington. Relatives living in America preferred, in fact, to apply direct to American organizations, as postal communications between the States and Switzerland took a long time and were uncertain during the war.

The United States Forces were in action on two fronts at the same time ; the work of the American Section in respect of the Pacific theatre of war and the European will be examined separately.

WAR IN THE PACIFIC

Apart from engagements in Wake and Guam Islands and in the Philippines, when the United States lost almost all the land forces that went into action, operations in the Pacific were for the most part carried out by the Air Force and the Navy, and relatively small numbers of men were employed.

All the PW looked after by the American Section were captured during the first months of the fighting. Later, the only members of the American Forces taken prisoner were the airmen forced down during raids on Japan, or on territories occupied by the Japanese. No difficulties, therefore, arose in sending information concerning these men, since the work was spread out, as it will be seen, over the whole period of the war.

Japan was not a signatory to the 1929 Convention relative to the treatment of PW. When Japan came into the war, the ICRC at once invited the Japanese Government to make declarations which would practically have the same effect as adherence to this Convention. The Japanese Government, having received assurances of reciprocity, at once agreed to exchange information on PW and civilian internees, and a Japanese official Information Bureau was set up by Imperial Decree on December 27, 1941¹.

The Committee's Delegation in Tokyo, after many attempts, at length succeeded in securing, in April 1942, from the Japanese authorities particulars concerning American combatants and civilians captured when Wake and Guam Islands were taken. The details were at once cabled to the Agency.

As postal communications between Switzerland and the United States were uncertain and difficult, the American Section decided to cable to the Washington Official Bureau all information on prisoners, in advance of the despatch of photostat

¹ The "Huryojohokioku" or the Japanese Ministry of War Information Bureau on Prisoners of War. On the matter of Japan's agreement to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the 1929 Geneva Convention relative to Treatment of Prisoners of War, see the chapter on the War in the Far East in Vol. I, where the subject is dealt with in detail.

copies of documents. This practice, which was one of the special features of the Section, had for similar reasons already been employed by the British Section since 1940.

In May 1942 the Japanese Official Bureau sent their first cable announcing captures. In the following months they yielded only little information, and it was not until December 1942, seven months after the end of the Philippines campaign, that the Japanese finally cabled to Geneva the first notifications of captures in these operations.

The work of the Section in 1942 in regard to the war in the Pacific was almost wholly in behalf of civilians, most of whom had been members of the American colony in the Philippines. The enquiries which came in by thousands, entailed, as a rule, application to the Japanese Red Cross for information. The results, however, of these enquiries were most unsatisfactory¹.

A large number of these civilians were, however, able to exchange messages with their relatives in the United States. The Japanese Red Cross cabled them to the Agency and the latter to the American Red Cross. This system compensated, to a certain degree, for the poor response to enquiries.

Mention should also be made of the important investigation work carried out by the Committee's Delegations in Shanghai and Hongkong concerning civilians in China.

Communications from the Japanese Official Bureau about military personnel taken prisoner during the Philippines campaign, and subsequent notifications of transfers and deaths of prisoners, came in slowly all through the war. Even at the time of the surrender, the Japanese authorities had still not communicated all the nominal lists of men captured by them, or of those who had died while in their hands. Ordinary and diplomatic mail were too slow, and these communications were therefore made by cable.

As enquiries to the Huryojohokioku on missing members of the forces proved fruitless, the American Section, after a time, abandoned that course. The only enquiries made there-

¹ See also Vol. I, chapter already mentioned.

fore to the Bureau were those for supplementary details about men whose capture had already been officially notified.

In 1944, the Japanese authorities took the initiative of arranging an exchange of cable messages between PW and their next of kin. The restrictions the Japanese authorities had previously laid on the exchange of correspondence made this move particularly welcome. The messages, which all passed through Geneva, were assembled in the United States both on departure and arrival by the American Red Cross. In the Far East, transmission of cables devolved on the Japanese official Bureau. This system came into force in January 1945. It worked satisfactorily for messages from next of kin to PW, but very few messages arrived for relatives from the Far East ¹.

Thus the only service of the Japanese official Bureau was to cable information on capture, transfers and deaths of American military personnel to the Agency. Such information was often sent only after considerable delay. No lists were ever forwarded confirming data given in these cables, and no news reached the Agency concerning wounded and sick prisoners. The Japanese official Bureau also failed to send any death certificates. When a reckoning is made of the small success in seeking information from the Bureau, of the fact that the American Section was quite unable to make contact with camp spokesmen, and of the restrictions on mail imposed by the Japanese military authorities, it must be admitted that the situation was far from satisfactory.

EUROPEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

Since the chief adversary of the United States in this theatre was Germany, almost all American PW captured during European operations fell into German hands. Thus, the work of the American Section in respect of the operations in Europe was necessarily closely linked with its relations with the German official Bureau ².

¹ See page 61.

² Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Wehrmachtauskunftstelle für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgefangene, usually called "OKW".

Up to the time of the Allied landing in North Africa, on November 8, 1942, the only forces sent into action by the American Command were those of the USAF. Information relative to American airmen captured or shot down on duty was, throughout the war, granted priority transmission. The OKW, fulfilling the agreement on reciprocity, telegraphed this information, usually without delay, to Geneva, as they did in the case of British airmen. On receipt this information was translated into English and cabled by the American Section to the Official Bureau in Washington. The office in Washington was thus able to give word, almost at once, to the relatives of airmen casualties, with details of each case.

After November 8, 1942, and after the successive landings, the American forces were engaged in major operations in North Africa and in Europe. These troops suffered no serious reverses, but their increasing share in the Italian campaign, and later the part they played after the Allied landing in Normandy in 1944, led to the capture of some tens of thousands of men by the German forces.

Generally speaking, the OKW was able to fulfil its duties as Official Bureau till the end of the fighting. During the last months of the war, however, intensive bombing gradually disorganized the German administrative departments, and lists sent by the OKW often arrived too late to be entirely useful. In these circumstances, lists drawn up by camp leaders and capture cards filled in by prisoners themselves, which came direct to the Agency in a comparatively short time, were extremely valuable. When this information was found to contain new details it was cabled to the Washington Official Bureau along lines explained below.

The American Section set on foot enquiries chiefly at the request of the Washington Official Bureau. These researches which covered the missing, identification of PW or of the dead, the state of health and location of PW camps, were made, according to the particular case, by way of the German Official Bureau, camp leaders, and, less frequently, the German Red Cross. Results were on the whole satisfactory.

The Section was of service in the forwarding of a consider-

able volume of mail and messages. Thus, though the major portion of prisoner of war mail went through the ordinary postal channels, the Section, after checking addresses and sometimes after completing them with the help of the data contained in the card-index, sent over a million and a half letters and messages to camps. This large amount of mail was due to the fact that, on the strength of agreements concluded between the Agency and the American authorities, next of kin in the United States were allowed to write to PW by way of Geneva immediately on receiving capture cards, and without having to wait for further details informing them of the prisoner's exact place of detention. This arrangement meant that numbers of PW were able to get news from home in a relatively short time.

One of the chief characteristics of the work of the American Section was close and steady co-operation with camp leaders. Their help was indeed of very great service in providing information, attending to enquiries, and the transmission of messages.

* * *

The working methods of the American Section were, in general, similar to those of other National Sections. Two features should be mentioned, however, as they distinguished this Section from the others.

Whereas all the other National Sections built up their card-indexes with card entries in typescript, the American Section used Watson Machine cards, on which information was simultaneously recorded in typescript and registered by means of appropriate perforations ¹.

When the American Section was opened, the British Section had already recognized the usefulness of PW lists drawn up with the help of the Hollerith machines, according to army or PW numbers. Lists made in this way brought together cards relating to the same man, even in cases where several men had

¹ See Application of Hollerith machines to the work of the Central Agency, p. 108.

the same name or where the names were distorted : without this system, the cards relating to one man would have been filed separately. It was therefore decided that the lists of American PW should be drawn up in this way, and that for the American Section, the Hollerith cards should be at once established in duplicate. One copy was filed in the card-index and the other used for establishing lists. The Hollerith cards filed in the Section's index served the same purpose as the typescript cards in the other Sections.

As explained above, the American Section cabled information received from various sources on PW and internees to the Washington Official Bureau. This information very often came through, however, in a sequence different from that of events, and frequently information on the same man was received in exactly the same form from different sources. In these circumstances, it is obvious that had the American Section cabled all data as received to Washington, the U.S. Official Bureau would have been obliged, in dealing with such a flow of notifications, to classify them itself ; further, cable charges would have been very high.

To meet these difficulties, the Section made use of a system already tried out by the British Section, and which can be summarized as follows. On arrival in the Section data were sorted into two categories, each of which was dealt with in a different way. In the first were placed all documents giving names of PW or of deceased who, apparently, were unknown to the Agency. This information was immediately cabled to Washington ; the cards were made subsequently and filed in the index. The second class included all documents providing supplementary data or notification of transfer to other camps of PW already on the Agency's files. In this case information was first entered on cards which were checked with the card-index, and the filing clerks then decided, on the basis of information already registered, if it was necessary or not to cable the information just received.

In March 1945, the peak period of the American Section, the staff numbered 45.

Japanese Section

The Japanese Section was opened in December 1941, after the entry of Japan into the war.

Until the autumn of 1944, that is, for more than two and a half years, the Japanese Section concerned itself almost exclusively with civilians, either interned or at liberty. During this whole period, the number of Japanese soldiers who fell into enemy hands was extremely small, partly because the Japanese forces constantly had the upper hand during the first months of hostilities, and partly because the forces engaged in the later fighting were relatively small. A few lists of PW came in from the official Bureaux of New Zealand, Australia and the United States. The forwarding of these lists to the Japanese authorities constituted the only work the Section did for the benefit of the Japanese PW, since no one was ever concerned to ask for news of them. It is known that to be a PW has always been considered in Japan as a disgrace reflecting on the whole family¹.

With regard to civilians, the situation was very different. The large Japanese colonies in the United States, Canada, Australia and India were, from the outset, subject to security measures such as internment, removal and assembly in particular centres. The names of all Japanese interned or evacuated were communicated to the Central Agency by the authorities of the countries who had taken these measures. The forwarding of such information to Japan was not the only task of the Section. Relatives and friends in Japan became anxious, either because

¹ See Vol. I, "Conflict in the Far East".

they had failed to receive any notice of internment, or simply because they had been without news, as a result of the breakdown of postal communications. A large number of such enquiries reached the Japanese Section, and each case was taken up with the competent authority of the country in question, or very often with the Committee's delegations. These enquiries led to no immediate results, for these countries are separated by immense distances from Switzerland, and the process of censorship added greatly to the delay in the delivery of mail. It was only after several months that replies came in ; the Section was then in a position to answer almost all the applications.

From the autumn of 1944, the work of the Japanese Section changed. Until this date, it was chiefly a tracing bureau for civilians, now it became primarily an intermediary agency for the transmission of news of PW and civilian internees. This happened at a time when the final British and American offensive was launched in the Pacific, the first incident of which was the capture of the Marianne Islands. These operations led to the taking prisoner of many Japanese soldiers by the Allies and to the internment of a great number of civilians living in the captured territories.

Until the end of the war and for some time afterwards the main task of the Section was to forward to the Japanese authorities the information it received from the official Bureaux in the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and from the Committee's delegation in India, on the subject of PW and internees.

* * *

One of the distinguishing features of the work of the Japanese Section was the extensive use it made of the telegraph in transmitting information to Japan : this was the only rapid method of communicating with this country. As a rule, all information received by wire from the official Bureaux of captor States was sent to Japan by the same means.

The work of the Section in keeping the card-index up to date encountered great difficulties in the Japanese language.

There could, indeed, be no question of Western people using Japanese characters. In writing this language, a system of phonetic transcription is used which renders as accurately as possible the sounds of the Japanese language, and which allows the writing of Japanese in Latin characters. The principal source of difficulty for the Section was the current use of two systems of transliteration, which are marked by notable differences. One of these methods, devised at the end of the nineteenth century, was employed by the Japanese official Bureau ; the other, known as the Hepburn system, was used by the official Bureaux of the captor States and by civilian internees in their enquiries. The Japanese Section was forced to introduce special rules of filing which took both systems into account, and which allowed cards of application and information to be filed next to each other.

Finally, mention should be made of the fact, which had always to be borne in mind in the Section, that a person might be known and referred to under several different names. The confusion of family name and first name, and the frequent inaccuracy, no less frequent, of certain other details of identification, such as age, made classification still more difficult.

Hungarian Section

The Hungarian Section was set up as a result of the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union, in June 1941. Hungary went into the war as an ally of the Reich on June 27. During the greater part of the war, the Hungarian Section had comparatively little work to do ; but after the spring of 1944, and even more during the period which immediately followed the end of the war, events in Hungary led to a considerable increase in the activities of the Section.

No Hungarian unit saw service on the Western front. Only a few thousand Hungarian nationals belonging to the German racial group fought in the ranks of the Wehrmacht, mainly as SS troops. The Hungarian Section had to deal with the notifications of capture of these men and applications from their relatives, most of whom had remained in Hungary.

In the East, on the other hand, the Hungarian armed forces took an active part in operations. At first, their role was mainly confined to the occupation of territory conquered by the Wehrmacht. Thus, up to the winter of 1942-1943, they only suffered very small losses. Things changed, however, at the time of the Russian break-through at Voronesh in January 1943, during which the Hungarian army serving in the Russian campaign lost nearly half its strength, either killed or as prisoners : it is estimated that at that time 80,000 men fell into the hands of the Soviet forces.

Failing any information as to these PW, since the Central Agency received no official information from the Soviet Union, the Hungarian Section had to confine itself to registering the

numerous applications for enquiries and for news, to which these events gave rise.

Nevertheless, a certain number of Hungarian PW in the Soviet Union were able to communicate with their relatives in Hungary, since the men in certain of the camps had been provided with special message-cards. These messages sometimes passed through the Central Agency, and the Hungarian Section had in that case to forward them. The Hungarian Red Cross, for its part, forwarded to the Agency information received from the USSR through this exchange of messages, which enabled the Section to give news to many families living abroad, especially in the United States.

The Hungarian Section, during this first period of its activities, had to deal with some hundreds of civilian internees, including a good many seamen, who were scattered over a number of countries.

In March 1944, when the situation on the Eastern front became more and more threatening, Germany went ahead with the military occupation of Hungary, which was followed on October 15 of the same year, by the setting up of the "Arrow-head Cross" (*Croix fléchées*) regime. These events inaugurated a period of political persecution, during which more than 15,000 political prisoners and several hundred thousand Jews were deported.

Applications for enquiries coming from Hungary and from various other countries, particularly from the United States, began to pour in. The Hungarian Section saw its activities greatly increasing, the more so since application cards concerning men missing on the Eastern front were at the same time reaching it from the Hungarian Red Cross in great numbers. The Section, which had hitherto occupied only one or two people, rose gradually a strength of about ten assistants. Unfortunately the great amount of work done by the Section at this time was to a large extent unproductive, for the Agency received no information from the Soviet Union concerning the prisoners, nor from Germany in respect of the deportees ; only chance information sometimes enabled it to reply to applicants.

The Section did nevertheless, at this time have an oppor-

tunity of acting usefully for the Jews who were interned in Switzerland, especially with regard to the forwarding of mail to Hungary, Palestine and the United States, and the giving of information to relations in those countries.

Towards the end of the war, there was a fresh upheaval in Hungary, and the Section went through a period of intense activity. The retreat of the German army was followed by the occupation of the country by the Soviet forces. The greater part of the Hungarian army was driven into Germany, and so were the Hungarians of school age who had been enrolled in semi-military units. In all, there were about half a million men.

The troops of the regular army fell into the hands of British, French and United States forces, who, during the next few months, sent capture-cards in great numbers to the Agency, and also many official lists and death certificates; this at last gave the Hungarian Section an opportunity to do practical work, based on accurate information and the "tallies" of enquiries and replies. At the same time, a large number of letters and cards sent by these men to their relatives reached the Section.

Serious difficulties, however, arose in respect of the forwarding of all these data to the relatives. They were of the same kind as those met with at this time as regards communicating to Germany information concerning the PW and the dead of the German armed forces. Postal communications with Hungary were still cut off, and the Hungarian population, like the German, had been much scattered by recent events. Thus, nearly 500,000 Hungarian civilians of all kinds, driven by events, had taken refuge in Austria and Bavaria.

Altogether, more than one-tenth of the population of Hungary had been thus displaced. Applications therefore poured into the Agency. It was at this post-war period that the Hungarian Section was most active; its personnel numbered fifteen at the beginning of 1946.

To meet as far as possible the difficulties of forwarding information to Hungary, and to reach the addressees more speedily, the Section systematically resorted to the broadcasting of lists of names at this time. In the case of Transylvanians, names were read first in Hungarian and then in Rumanian.

During the year 1946, the repatriation of Hungarian PW in the hands of the Western Powers, following on that of the Austrians, led to a gradual diminishing in the work of the Hungarian Section. This was accentuated by the reopening of the postal traffic and the return to Hungary of certain groups of refugees and evacuees. Some of those who remained in Austria and in Germany were referred to other organizations. Thus, in the second part of 1946, the activities of the Hungarian Section were much reduced, and only a small correspondence section was henceforth required.

* * *

The filing of cards in the Hungarian index was made especially arduous by reason of the phonetic transliteration of Hungarian names. Furthermore, owing to the continual changes in the frontiers of Hungary, it was often difficult to decide which cases should be allotted to the Section. Further obstacles lay in the frequent transliteration of the names of applicants and of persons sought for into German, Rumanian, Serbian, Slovak, Ruthenian, etc.

The total correspondence received by the Hungarian Section up to June 30, 1947, amounted to more than 50,000 letters, to which several hundred telegrams should be added. It sent out more than 60,000 messages. Finally, there were nearly 350,000 cards in its card-index at that date.

Rumanian Section

The Rumanian Section was set up in June 1941, as a result of the entry of Rumania into the war on the side of Germany against the Soviet Union.

The history of Rumania during the second World War falls into two quite distinct periods, separated by the Russo-Rumanian armistice of August 24, 1944. During the first period Rumania fought against the Soviet Union, and during the second it fought against Germany. These two phases each in their turn influenced the activities of the Section.

The campaign in Russia involved heavy losses for the Rumanian army, both in killed and in prisoners. Since the USSR had not supplied any information concerning these men, the Rumanian Section had to confine itself to classifying the great number of applications received from Rumania ; more than 40,000 of these were received up to 1944, most of them coming from the Rumanian Red Cross. Attempts were made to obtain information from the USSR by means of enquiries, but they were unsuccessful.

Although the Agency received no official information, many Rumanian PW in the USSR were able to send message-cards giving news to their relatives. The Rumanian Section received from the Rumanian Red Cross about 5,000 names of PW who had sent out news in this way, which made it possible to reply to applicants living outside Rumania.

In December 1941, a state of war was declared between Rumania, Great Britain, and the United States ; the Rumanian Section had henceforth to forward lists and messages, and to set on foot enquiries with regard to the civilians who were interned by degrees in the countries of the British Common-

wealth and America. Among these, mention should be made of the members of crews of oil tankers which were stopped and examined by the British Navy ; these men were interned in India.

At the request of relatives living abroad, the Rumanian Section also set on foot many enquiries in Rumania itself, in respect of Rumanian civilians, and it was often possible to supply definite information to the applicants, especially to those in North America.

The armistice of August 24, 1944 led to the change in alliance and to the entry of Rumania into the war on the side of the Allies.

Among the many Rumanian divisions who, after that time, fought on the side of the Allies, there were two which were formed of ex-prisoners in U.S.S.R. By reason of the chaotic situation in Germany at that time, the Agency did not receive much information with regard to Rumanian PW captured by the German forces. Certain camp leaders took the initiative themselves in preparing lists of their fellow-countrymen in the camps and managed to send them to Geneva. In the same way, it was possible to send a certain number of capture cards to the Agency.

The Section also received capture cards and lists in respect of about 2,000 Rumanian PW who were taken in Germany in somewhat exceptional circumstances. These were Rumanian military personnel assigned to that country by the Government for military training or co-ordination. Being cut off on German territory by the armistice of August 24, these men were taken prisoner. The Section telegraphed all their names to the Rumanian Red Cross.

When the Rumanian internees in the concentration camps were released by the Allied forces, the Section broadcast several thousand names of the survivors by wireless ; the names of the Transylvanians were read out in Rumanian and Hungarian. The broadcasting of lists of names was the only means of giving speedy information to next of kin, many of whom were themselves displaced. After broadcasting, the lists were forwarded to the Rumanian Red Cross.

The Section had to deal with a special category of Rumanian subjects, that of the " Volksdeutsche " or members of the German racial minority in Rumania, who were natives of Transylvania or of the Banat, and who had been enrolled in the German army. Several thousands of them were captured by the British, French and United States forces, and the Agency received capture-cards, lists and identity cards concerning them. Most of them were shown in these documents, or described themselves as Rumanians ; therefore the Section had to deal with them, working in close contact with the German Section. This information was communicated to the Rumanian Red Cross, to be passed on to the families concerned.

A certain proportion of members of the German racial minority had retired into Germany and Austria with the German troops. At the end of the war, several thousands of these " Volksdeutsche " reported themselves to the Agency as " dispersed Rumanian civilians ", and asked for news of their relations. In certain cases, the Rumanian Section was able to put members of families thus scattered in touch with each other.

Finally, it should be said that the staff of the Rumanian Section was never more than three, and that on June 30, 1947 it had nearly 120,000 cards in its index.

Bulgarian Section

On February 19, 1941, Bulgaria joined the Tripartite Pact and allowed German troops to enter her territory. This act led her to break off diplomatic relations with Belgium, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Poland, and brought her into the war.

The campaigns in Yugoslavia and Greece were the principal military events in which the Bulgarian Army took part. But the fighting was done mainly by the German Army, and the Bulgarian troops, although they had occupied part of Serbia, Macedonia and Eastern Thrace, did not make contact with the Yugoslav and Greek forces.

In these circumstances there were no Bulgarian PW at this stage, so that there was no question of forming a Bulgarian Section at the Central Agency.

It was not until January 1942, that the ICRC notified the Bulgarian Government that the services of the Agency were at its disposal, in accordance with the PW Convention of 1929. In point of fact, although no formal state of war existed between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, a large number of Bulgarians fought in the ranks of the German Army on the Eastern Front, and the Agency had already received some applications concerning missing men. The attempts made by the Section to get information concerning Bulgarian soldiers missing on the Eastern Front were however unsuccessful.

The breaking off of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Great Britain brought about the internment of a number of Bulgarians, especially in Palestine, Egypt and India. The Section forwarded any information received concerning them

to the Bulgarian Red Cross. It also set enquiries on foot with the British authorities.

At the end of 1944, Bulgaria declared war on Germany. During the engagements which followed, several hundred Bulgarians were taken prisoner. Although the German official Bureau did not communicate any information regarding these men to the Central Agency, the camp leaders forwarded nominal rolls, which the Agency passed on to the Bulgarian Red Cross.

The state of war between Bulgaria and Germany brought about the separation of Bulgarian students in Germany and members of the small agricultural settlements in Germany and Yugoslavia from their relatives and friends in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Section acted as intermediary amongst these people in the exchange of news. It continued to carry out this task after the war, as postal communications between Bulgaria and Germany were not restored again until a long time after.

Finnish Section

When in November 1939, war broke out between Finland and the USSR, the ICRC informed the Finnish Government that, although Finland had not ratified the 1929 PW Convention, the Committee was prepared to receive and transmit information concerning the wounded and prisoners. At the same time, the ICRC made all the necessary preparation for a Finnish Section at the Central Agency. The Finnish Government informed the ICRC that it had instructed the Finnish Red Cross to constitute an official Information Bureau, as required in Art. 77 of the Convention.

The Soviet Government, however, supplied no information on Finnish prisoners, and the Agency was unable to be of any service to the Finnish PW captured in this first campaign.

In June 1941, when the German forces invaded Russia, Finland once more took up arms against that country. At the start of this second Russo-Finnish war, the ICRC reminded both Governments of the terms of the 1929 Geneva Convention proper and of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 on the laws and customs of war on land, both Conventions having been ratified by Finland and Russia. Both agreed to apply the treaty stipulations of these Conventions, subject to reciprocity. They further undertook to allow PW to fill in capture cards and to exchange nominal lists of PW. Unfortunately, no lists ever arrived from Russia and when this particular conflict ended in 1944, the Section had been unable to do anything in behalf of Finnish PW.

Certain tasks were nevertheless fulfilled by the Finnish Section. In December 1941, Great Britain and the Dominions

declared they were in a state of war with Finland. Many Finnish vessels then at sea or in harbour were seized by the British Navy. The crews were interned and considered as civilian internees by the Powers who held them. At the beginning of 1942 information on these seamen began to reach the Agency, which the Section forwarded to the Finnish Red Cross.

Further, fairly large Finnish colonies exist in the British Commonwealth, the United States and South America. These people, cut off from their home country and gravely concerned about the fate of their relatives and friends, applied to the Agency. The Finnish Section started enquiries with the Finnish Red Cross which was, in most cases, able to reply in due course.

Baltic Section

In June 1940, the territories of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania were once more brought within the U.S.S.R. In the following year, after the German advance towards the East, these three States were in turn occupied by the German armed forces. Finally, in December 1943, the Soviet forces took possession of them yet again.

As a consequence of these events, the citizens of these three countries were recruited into either Soviet or German forces, and numbers of people were evacuated or deported.

It was not until the end of 1942, however, that the Central Agency had to deal with cases relating to the citizens of these three States. At this time, nationals of the Baltic States domiciled in Canada, South Africa and the United States, were anxious about the fate of their relatives still living in those States, and sent a number of applications to the Agency. In January 1943, therefore, the Section for Baltic Countries was set up in order to deal with the cases of Esthonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. To the above applications others were added from citizens living in the Soviet Union whose countries of origin were the Baltic States. These requests came by way of the Committee's delegation in Teheran. Most of these applications were the subject of enquiries made to the German Red Cross. With the exception of enquiries concerning Jews, for which no replies were received, the results on the whole were satisfactory; replies, however, only came in after long delay.

As there was no possibility of carrying out enquiries in the U.S.S.R., the Section for Baltic Countries, in order to reply to applications, attempted to obtain information regarding citizens

of the Baltic States in that country by sending messages to them direct. Only eighty of these were returned to the Agency with replies, after an interval of more than two years.

In February 1945, there was an increase in the number of enquiries received from South Africa and the United States. Unfortunately, all communications with the Baltic States had been broken off at this time.

Sundry Nationalities

The Agency was called upon to extend its work to include certain combatants and civilians who were nationals of non-belligerent countries. This applied in particular to nationals of Abyssinia, Afghanistan, Andorra, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Switzerland and Turkey, as well as to non-Jewish stateless, in possession or not of a Nansen passport. Nationals of a neutral country, or stateless persons who had been resident for many years in a country now suddenly involved in the war, sometimes enlisted in the armed forces of that country. Nationals of neutral states also left their own country to enlist in the forces of one or the other group of belligerents.

In the event of these volunteers being taken prisoner, the Detaining Power usually considered them as nationals of the State they had served, and sent information concerning them to the Agency.

A few belligerent States took measures to confine certain nationals of neutral countries resident in their territories: some of these were interned, others detained. These States sent information on these persons to the Agency. No official information, however, reached the Agency, as is well known, concerning deportees in concentration camps.

The Agency's work consisted in transmitting to the relatives of these prisoners and civilian internees any information received about them. These communications usually went through the municipal authorities of the places of residence of relatives, or through the intermediary of the clergy. Information relative to prisoners was also sent to the official Bureau of the Power they had served.

The Agency was often asked to undertake search, not only for volunteers and for civilian internees, but also for civilians of whom the enquirer had lost all trace, following on the breakdown of postal communications.

The most frequent cases of this kind were those of Swiss nationals and of stateless persons.

Austrian Section

Since the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938 and up to the end of the war, nationals of the former Austria had in fact German nationality. During the war they did not constitute special units in the Wehrmacht, but were scattered throughout the army as a whole, in such a way that they took their share in all that befell nationals of the Reich. Their capture, or their decease, were announced to the Central Agency by the Allied official Bureaux as the capture or decease of German military personnel. The Agency, whose national Sections, as we know, were based on the nationality of the prisoners, defined by the frontiers as they existed on September 1, 1939, could only take into account the *de facto* situation, in dealing with Austrian nationals within the framework of the German Section, without making any distinction.

The reconstitution of a national Austrian Government as a result of the collapse of the Third Reich, led the ICRC, in the month of May 1945, to consider the setting up of a Section in the Central Agency, which would look after Austrian nationals and thus help them, to some degree, to escape the disastrous consequences of the dissolution of any official centralizing body, such as the O.K.W. and the German Red Cross, and of all the German machinery for the giving out of information supplied by Geneva.

In order to set up an Austrian Section in Geneva, it was first necessary that the detaining States should agree that communications concerning PW who declared themselves to be Austrians and were recognized as such, should thenceforth be made separately from those concerning Germans, and that

capture-cards, lists, identity cards and death certificates should specify clearly the Austrian nationality. The ICRC took the initiative in making representations for this purpose ; in June 1945 it applied to the Allied Powers seeking their agreement. Although the various detaining States did not all meet this request at the same time, or in an equally satisfactory manner, the Agency was soon receiving an increasing number of data which were clearly marked as referring to Austrians.

On July 2, 1945, an Austrian Service was set up within the German Section. On October 1, it became an independent Section, the last to be established in the Central Agency.

In order to allocate information received and applications for enquiries to the new Section, the Agency decided to define members of the forces who should be regarded as Austrians in the following manner.

(1) All those referred to as such by the detaining Power in the documents which it forwarded to Geneva.

(2) All those who declared themselves to be Austrians on their capture-cards.

(3) All those whose relatives described them as Austrians in their applications.

(4) Failing an explicit definition of the nationality on the documents, all those whose place of birth and address of parents (last domicile) were both in Austria, taking as a basis the frontiers of that country as they existed in 1938, before the Anschluss.

When the Austrian Service (which later became the Austrian Section) was set up, information and applications poured in, and the card-index speedily increased. It was at this time that the Allied official Bureaux sent to Geneva a vast amount of data on the capture and the death of members of the Wehrmacht during the last period of the war. A considerable proportion of this information—it may be estimated at 10 per cent—concerned Austrians.

The staff working in the new Section were obliged, as a matter of routine, to consult the card-index of the German Section

for all the information and requests received, since that index contained a considerable amount of data concerning Austrians, which had reached the Agency before the setting up of an independent Section.

The Austrian Section was thus very quickly faced by an onerous task ; its staff had to be therefore considerably increased : in the summer of 1946, it reached the figure of about 30 people. The Section was also greatly assisted by the Auxiliary Sections in Switzerland ; in the end, two working teams were set up by the Agency among the Austrian military personnel interned in Switzerland.

During the first months of its existence, the Austrian Section experienced the same kind of difficulties as the German Section, by reason of the dissolution of the the O.K.W. and the German Red Cross, which during the war had taken over all the work of distributing the information supplied by the Central Agency. As in Germany, the Committee's delegations in Austria were called on to meet this deficiency as far as possible, until qualified national bodies were set up. It was for this reason that, until the end of the year 1945, the Austrian Section sent all the data it received to the delegation in Vienna, which was responsible for forwarding them to the provincial branches of the Austrian Red Cross or to the relatives. The delegations on their part assembled countless applications from relatives and sent them to Geneva.

As soon as the Austrian Red Cross was reconstituted, that organization took over the task carried out in other countries by the official Information Bureaux, since circumstances did not allow of the setting up of such an office in Austria. At first, the Austrian Red Cross met with great difficulties in its work, as it was still inadequately equipped and was divided into several regional sections which were not in touch with each other, by reason of the division of the country into zones of occupation.

In February 1946, the Austrian Red Cross research services were amalgamated, and it was decided to set up a central card-index at Salzburg. From that time onwards, the Austrian Section sent all the information it received to this index centre,

and was thus able to do without the intermediary of the Committee's delegation in Austria.

These measures, however, could only represent a first stage towards the complete co-ordination of research in respect on Austrian military personnel and civilians. In fact, investigations with regard to the Eastern Front were, for practical reasons, centralized at Vienna and Graz, and not at Salzburg ¹. It was now a case of organizing co-ordination between the three research centres. This aim was achieved during a national conference of the heads of all the *Suchstellen* in Austria, which was convened by the Austrian Red Cross at the suggestion of the ICRC. It was held at Salzburg at the end of October 1946, under the chairmanship of a representative of the Central Agency.

From that time, the Agency was increasingly able to transfer its duties in behalf of the Austrians to the national organizations, and as a result of that fact, the time approached for the Austrian Section to be wound up. This winding up was further hastened by the repatriation of the Austrian PW in the hands of the Western Powers ².

As from May 1, 1947, the Section maintained only a small correspondence service, which was mainly occupied in seeking evidence as to deaths.

Up to June 30, 1947 the mail received by the Australian Section amounted to 377,542 letters, 280,373 messages to be forwarded and 312 telegrams. Furthermore, up to that date, this Section had started 6,026 enquiries. Finally, at the same date, there were 480,031 cards in its card-index.

¹ The *Suchstelle* in Vienna dealt with enquiries concerning the Eastern front in the strict sense of the term, and that at Graz with those concerning PW camps in Yugoslavia.

² It should be remembered that the repatriation of Austrian prisoners came after that of the Italians, but before that of the Hungarian and German prisoners.

Medical Personnel

The Medical Personnel Section of the Central Agency, or Medical Section, dealt with individual cases of members of the medical personnel and those of similar status. The Section was formed owing to the fact that this personnel, called " Protected Personnel ", enjoyed a distinct status, laid down by the 1929 Geneva Convention for the relief of the wounded and sick in armies in the field ¹.

The principal duties of the Medical Section were the following :

- (1) Enquiries and steps relating to individual members of Protected Personnel.
- (2) Enquiries and steps relating to the state of health of PW, and the repatriation of the sick and wounded.

(1) *Protected Personnel* ²

The Medical Section was divided into Services which corresponded to the various National Sections of the Central Agency. In line with these, the Medical Section had adopted the criterion of nationality to classify cases relating to Protected Personnel and the sick and wounded in captivity. Each subsection worked in close co-operation with the corresponding National Section.

¹ For all general questions concerning Protected Personnel, see Vol. I, Part II, chap. C.

² As defined by Arts. 9, 10 and 11 of the 1929 Geneva Convention for relief of the wounded and sick.

On the whole, the enquiries and negotiations conducted by the Medical Section in behalf of Protected Personnel covered the same ground as the National Sections, i. e. researches, the transmission of information and messages, etc.

In addition to this work the Medical Section was concerned with the recognition of Protected Personnel who had been captured and dealt with the applications for their repatriation ; this was the main field of its activities.

Enquiries.

During the summer of 1940, the Medical Section set on foot a great number of enquiries for medical personnel who were missing and presumed to be retained in Germany. In particular cases and for medical officers especially, the method was to send a letter of enquiry to the German Red Cross. The results were in general very satisfactory. When research was made on whole units, and the application was accompanied by a list of the missing personnel (at that period chiefly relating to nurses), a special type of enquiry was opened : these enquiries were addressed at the same time to the German and the French Red Cross. The results obtained were excellent, when it was a question of missing persons belonging to the same unit.

The same type of enquiry was resumed in 1941 and developed according to the principles applied by the National Sections for the regimental enquiries¹. The Medical Section then made enquiries amongst the medical personnel detained in the camps, and half the replies received by this means were positive.

The Section continued its enquiries during the succeeding years. Special mention should be made of the growth of the Italian Service from 1941 onwards. Italian PW in British hands were frequently moved, and the camp lists often reached the Agency after great delay. Nevertheless, the Service was able to register the fact, that several thousand Italian medical personnel were repatriated fairly speedily by means of convoys from Egypt and India.

¹ See p. 49.

The German Service began to grow mainly from 1943 onwards. The first lists arrived from North Africa. Photostats of all lists containing German medical personnel received in Geneva were sent in duplicate to Berlin, one copy for the OKW (which had the responsibility of forwarding information to relatives), and one for the German Red Cross.

Certificates of Identity.

As we have seen, the most important duty of the Medical Section was to keep vigilance over the application of the Geneva Convention to Protected Personnel.

Article 21 of the Geneva Convention lays down that Protected Personnel shall be provided with an identity document to certify their status, which they shall in no case be deprived of: in case of loss they have the right to obtain a duplicate. In point of fact, many of the medical personnel recently captured were not in possession of this vital document — some had never received such a paper, some had lost it; in other cases it had been destroyed in the course of events, or by application of official orders; finally, in some instances the document had been taken away from the PW at the time of his capture, in violation of treaty stipulations.

French Medical Personnel. — From the autumn of 1940, thousands of applications for certificates of identity for French personnel began to reach the Medical Section. This question was taken up with the competent authorities concerned, that is, with former recruiting centres which had meanwhile become demobilization depots. The applications were forwarded to these offices and in return the Medical Section received certificates of identity proving that the PW concerned were recognized to be medical personnel. These certificates, which consisted of a single sheet of paper stamped by the demobilization depot, were seldom accepted by the German authorities, on the grounds that they could easily be forged. In spite of these difficulties, a considerable number of medical personnel were given recognition and later on repatriated.

The Medical Section also received numerous requests for repatriation from PW's next of kin. Representations were made by the ICRC to the German authorities, who replied however, that in accordance with an agreement made with the French Government, only members of medical personnel who were not employed in camp infirmaries or military hospitals would be recognized as eligible for repatriation. All the applications, therefore, had to be refused.

The agreement for the retention of medical personnel in German camps was moreover confirmed by the French Government. The applications for medical identity cards and repatriation had to be henceforth addressed to the Army Medical Service in Paris, which undertook the necessary steps.

British Medical Personnel. — In 1941 the same problem arose for British medical personnel in German hands. The Medical Section got in touch with the British Government, and sent it the lists of duplicate certificates required. These papers were transmitted through the Protecting Power.

The Dominions applied to the Medical Section for the transmission of duplicates to applicants in Germany, but the Detaining Power refused to recognize these documents, on the grounds that they bore dates later than that of capture of the applicant (duplicates of course bore the date of issue). In spite of all representations made in Berlin, these difficulties continued until the end of hostilities.

No repatriation of British protected personnel took place until October 1945. During the first exchange of war disabled and sick, a few hundred medical personnel were able to leave with these convoys.

Belgian Medical Personnel. — The work of the Belgian Service in sending on medical certificates was greatly simplified by the fact that the Belgian Red Cross assumed the task of obtaining recognition by the occupying Power of Belgian protected personnel. All applications received at Geneva were transmitted to Brussels in the form of lists, after being registered in the index.

Italian Medical Personnel. — Until the Italian capitulation in September 1943, applications for duplicate certificates were forwarded to the Italian Red Cross in Rome, which assumed the task of seeing that these documents reached the applicants through the Protecting Power. After the armistice of 1943, there was no longer any possibility of obtaining identity certificates for medical personnel in captivity, and there was therefore no means of giving any help on this question. Italian members of the forces held by the German army were not considered as PW by the German Government, but as military internees. The German authorities therefore refused Italian medical personnel the protection of the Geneva Convention, on the grounds that the armed forces to which they belonged had not been captured in the course of military operations.

German Medical Personnel. — The Medical Section did not have to deal with identity certificates for German protected personnel until the end of hostilities. The German Red Cross forwarded duplicates direct through the Protecting Power. A few single applications were received at Geneva, which the German Service forwarded to the German Red Cross.

From the close of hostilities, and owing to the absence of a Protecting Power, the German Service received a great number of applications for identity certificates from German medical personnel retained in France, Great Britain, the United States or in the zones in Germany occupied by the three Powers.

The Medical Section was therefore faced with a fresh problem, as the applicants' country of origin no longer had any government and the National Red Cross had been dissolved. In addition, the records of the medical personnel, in Berlin, had been destroyed during the bombing. Applications continued to accumulate in the Medical Section, without it being possible to satisfy the applicants.

Relief of Medical Officers.

In 1943, an agreement was concluded between France and Germany to organize the relief of medical officers on duty in

captivity. The German Government said they were unable to supply a list of French medical officers in PW camps who fulfilled the conditions required for their replacement by colleagues sent from France. The delegates of the ICRC in Berlin undertook to collect this information in course of their visits to camps, and a great number of lists were thus forwarded to Geneva; these had usually been drawn up by the camp leader or the Senior Medical Officer. The lists were assembled, copied and forwarded to the French authorities, who made use of them to organize the planning of the replacements.

Affiliated Societies.

The Medical Section had to examine applications from members of societies affiliated to the National Red Cross Societies, such as the Friends' Ambulance Units, Knights of Malta, and others, who wished to be recognized as members of protected personnel. Since the members of these societies had no recognized certificates of identity, the Medical Section was unable to supply of proof these men were attached to a Medical Service, and their efforts in this direction were only successful in a few cases.

(2). Medical enquiries and Repatriation of sick and wounded.

During the summer of 1940 a new task began for the Medical Section which was to extend considerably at a later date.

The National Sections, and the French and Belgian in particular, began to receive applications for the repatriation of sick or seriously wounded PW. Since the armistice convention signed between France and Germany contained stipulations relating to PW, the ICRC was no longer in a position to see that the Geneva Convention was applied as a whole, and the sick and wounded could not apply to the Mixed Medical Commissions. The National Sections passed on these applications to the Medical Section which, having a doctor in charge, was especially qualified to deal with them.

The Medical Section did not receive the lists of the sick and wounded for which Art. 4 of the Geneva Convention provides. The German authorities declared it to be an impossible task to supply such lists, because of the great number of PW taken during the Battle of France. Nevertheless, they gave the Medical Section the opportunity of corresponding direct with the German camp medical officers in order to obtain news individually of patients in infirmaries and military hospitals. Families in France and Belgium, having relatives who were PW in Germany, applied to the ICRC to have them repatriated. The Medical Section based its enquiries to camp medical officers on the Model Draft Agreement for direct repatriation or accommodation in a neutral country of PW for reasons of health, annexed to the 1929 Convention. They eventually applied for the immediate repatriation of sick PW, if these men fulfilled the conditions laid down in the Model Draft Agreement.

The Medical Enquiry Service remained in close contact with the National Sections for the opening of enquiries concerning sick or wounded PW. The index-cards concerning these men were filed in the National Sections, who handed the file to the Medical Section after it had been checked. The Registry also forwarded correspondence from next of kin of sick PW, or from camp leaders, direct to the Medical Section, which checked the material with the National Sections before opening a medical enquiry. Such enquiries were usually based on a request from the PW himself, his relatives, or the camp leader.

To enable an enquiry to be opened with the camp medical officer the following facts had to be known :

- (1) The exact address of the PW.
- (2) The illness from which he was suffering when the application was made.
- (3) If he was undergoing treatment or in hospital.
- (4) Address of his next of kin.

When full information was available, the Medical Enquiries Service, after making out duplicate cards, wrote to the camp Senior Medical Officer. This enquiry was always signed by the

medical head of the Section—an essential precaution, since the passing on of diagnosis details was sometimes confidential.

Replies generally took from four to six weeks to reach the Medical Section, and were forwarded to the applicants, after being submitted to the head of the Section. If the diagnosis revealed an illness justifying an application for repatriation under the terms of the Model Agreement, this application was attached to the acknowledgement sent to the camp medical officer.

All correspondence concerning each case dealt with was registered on the card filed in the Medical Section. Each PW had his personal dossier. No diagnosis was given on the cards of the National Section.

The Medical Section also received lists regularly from some Detaining Powers of PW in their hands who were patients in hospital. These lists, besides enabling the Section to keep the relatives of those concerned informed of the patients' state of health, also allowed statistics of diseases and causes of deaths to be kept up to date. These statistics gave an indication of the state of health in the camps, and were also a useful aid to the Pharmaceutical Section in allocating consignments of medicines and medical supplies amongst the various camps.

Mixed Medical Commissions.

British and United States PW in Germany, as well as PW in Allied hands, could present themselves before the Mixed Medical Commissions which visited the camps at regular intervals. Various methods were used by the Medical Section in requesting the Detaining Power to present sick PW to these Commissions. These requests were based on an application from any of the following :

- (1) Sick or wounded PW.
- (2) PW medical officer treating the case.
- (3) Camp leader.
- (4) PW's next of kin.
- (5) National Red Cross.
- (6) Power of origin.

- (7) Requests were also based on results of medical enquiries carried out by the Medical Section.

Lists of the sick were drawn up regularly ; one copy was sent to the head of the Medical Commission, one to the Government of the Detaining Power, and one to the delegation of the ICRC in the country where the Commission was due to carry on its work, in order that a delegate could verify if the man had really been examined.

The Medical Section was however, despite numerous representations made by the ICRC, never able to verify officially that the decisions taken by the Medical Commissions were put into effect. Very often men were kept in camps, when, as they claimed, they had been passed for repatriation. The ICRC had occasion to establish that their claims were sometimes justified ; in that event, it took action with the Detaining Power.

Delegates' Reports.

The Medical Section was especially concerned with conditions of health and hygiene in the camps. Data taken from the delegates' reports were recorded on cards : the information gathered in the course of the many camp visits formed a basis for intervening ultimately with the Detaining Powers, when the conditions of hygiene in camp premises did not conform to the conditions stipulated in the 1929 Convention. In the case of epidemics, it was possible to pursue collective enquiries.

Epidemics.

In the winter of 1943, the delegation in Berlin reported that cases of exanthematic typhus had occurred in PW camps, and that it seemed a matter of urgency to vaccinate all medical personnel working in military hospitals. An extensive enquiry was opened with all German camp medical officers. The forms sent to them were very accurately filled in and gave precise details on the number of medical personnel and of those carrying out disinfection and delousing, at the same time recording their nationality. Finally they reported on the number of men already vaccinated and on the quantity of vaccines required.

(3) *Artificial Limbs*

The Artificial Limbs Service, attached to the Medical Section, was set up in order to provide medical aid for PW who, although amputees, were still detained in captivity. The Service also supplied dental material ; its activity is described in Volume III.

* * *

A few figures of significance will serve to close this summary of activities of the Medical Section from September 1939 to June 1947 :

Enquiries undertaken concerning Medical Personnel.	63,000
Applications for duplicates of identity certificates dealt with by the Section	22,000
Messages transmitted for Medical Personnel . . .	49,000
Medical enquiries undertaken	24,000
Cases dealt with.	200,188

CID (Sundry Civilian Internees Section)

The CID (*Civils internés divers*) Section was set up in 1940 to assemble all searches for persons who had been interned by police regulations. These people, unlike the ordinary civilian internees, did not benefit by treaty protection and further, had no Protecting Power. They were refugees of various origin, mostly Jewish fugitives, but they also included men who had survived from the International Brigades which had fought in Spain, veterans from labour service units, and others. These cases could not be allocated to the National Sections, as it was impossible at the time to determine with any certainty the nationality of each person. To deal with them, a separate Section had to be set up.

From April 1942, the CID Section took over all cases of stateless persons, with the exception of those in possession of Nansen passports. The enquiries included refugees, in most cases of German or Czech origin, scattered throughout the world. In the autumn of 1942, the Section was given the enquiries on Jews on German origin, or belonging to countries under German domination, who had been deported to Eastern regions. From that time the CID Section became more extensive.

During 1943, it was decided to hand over all cases of persons of a definite nationality to the National Sections, and to retain in the CID Section only those concerning German and Austrian Jews, and stateless persons.

In these circumstances, the data on which the Section worked were inevitably very vague. Nothing was known about the destination of the convoys in which the persons under enquiry had been included. Equally, there was no indication of the date

of their arrest, and there were no responsible organizations from which to seek information. The Section had, therefore, to make enquiries from various organizations which might possibly in time be able to supply information. These were the National Red Cross Societies, the International Migration Service, municipal authorities, relief societies or charitable institutions, various religious bodies and private persons. Enquiry forms were also sent to all the camps known to the ICRC in the hope of reaching some of the persons under enquiry.

The CID Section also dealt with the transmission of messages to or from Jewish internees. Thousands of messages were sent out, but the replies received were few.

On the whole, the results achieved by the CID Section were, by force of circumstances, very disappointing. Almost the whole of its work was concerned with Jews, and it is common knowledge that neither Germany, nor countries under German control would give any information on these people.

At the peak of its activity in 1944, the CID Section had a staff of 15 persons.

IMPA

The IMPA Section (Immigration into Palestine) was set up on December 1, 1943, to assemble individual cases concerning Jewish families in Germany or occupied countries.

The decision to assemble these cases within one Section was due to the fact that all those concerned were exposed to the same risks. In accordance with the method followed at the Agency, this identity of circumstances called for the formation of a separate service. These people could no longer claim their nationality, which the German Government no longer recognized. The National Sections were therefore not qualified to deal with questions concerning them.

These cases had formerly been handled by the various National Sections, if the nationality was known, or by the CID Section, when the nationality was unknown or doubtful.

The principal lines of work of the IMPA Section were :

- (1) Immigration certificates for Palestine.
- (2) South American passports.
- (3) Handling of applications and opening of various enquiries.
- (4) Broadcasting.

(1) *Immigration Certificates for Palestine.*

In an attempt to delay the deportation of Jewish families, the IMPA Section adopted a form whereby the people concerned were told that some of them had been placed on Palestine immigration lists, and that others might be listed in due course. The text, which quoted a registration number, was then sent either by wire, by collective letter or by one of the message

forms used by the Agency, in the hope that these documents would enable those concerned to get the date of their deportation postponed.

The IMPA Section had, firstly, to co-ordinate all general information relating to registration on the immigration lists, and to verify the applications and entries recorded. In order to obtain this information, they applied to the various Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Council, the Palestine Office, as well as the Jewish communities.

The work done by the Section in regard to immigration certificates was considerable and required the most scrupulous attention to detail. The ICRC was determined that no means should be neglected to come to the help of the Jews living under a threat. Unhappily, as it might have been feared, the results did not correspond to the exertions made. Although the IMPA Section sent out many tens of thousands of immigration certificate numbers, only 285 people to their knowledge were able to benefit by these in practice.

(2) *South American Passports.*

The Section also had to deal with various questions connected with obtaining passports of South American and Central American States for Jews who wished to leave Europe.

(3) *Enquiries.*

From May 1945 onwards, after the close of hostilities, the IMPA Section began careful search for the people, with whom it had been concerned during the war. Since the people who were the subject of the enquiry had, in practically all these cases, disappeared without leaving any clue, the results proved of course sadly disappointing. Cases of deported children were very numerous and especially distressing.

(4) *Broadcasting.*

Since July 1945, the IMPA Section took part in the broadcasting of the ICRC¹, by publishing lists of survivors of concen-

¹ See p. 82.

tration camps, thus bringing to the knowledge of families, often themselves displaced, news of relatives from whom they had not heard for many years.

Finally, during 1947, trial broadcasts were made in the attempt to obtain information from survivors of concentration camps, who might possibly have knowledge of facts concerning those who had disappeared.

Internment in Switzerland

The Section of the Agency for cases of internment in Switzerland (called the "Internment Section") was organized in January 1942 to bring together for treatment, individual cases of military internees and refugee civilians in Switzerland. The following distinctions were drawn between the various categories of military internees and civilian refugees :

(1) *Military Internees* proper, according to Art. 11 of the Fifth Hague Convention of 1907.

(2) *Escaped Prisoners of War*, according to Art. 13 of the same Convention.

(3) *Military Refugees*. Such were, for instance, members of the Italian forces belonging to units disarmed by the German troops and who, feeling themselves to be in danger, had come singly or in groups to Switzerland, where they were interned.

(4) *Partisans*, mainly Italians who sought refuge in Switzerland, singly or in groups, sometimes accompanied by their relatives.

(5) *Deserters*.

(6) *Defaulters*, men having left an army they did not consider that of their country. This was the case of numerous Alsatians.

(7) *Hospital Cases*, sick foreign soldiers nursed in Switzerland in accordance with the terms of special conventions concluded with the States concerned.

(8) *Civilians*, comprising :

(a) *Emigrants*, provided with valid papers and a visa for a country of destination, and staying temporarily in Switzerland whilst awaiting an opportunity to continue their journey.

(b) *Civilian Refugees*: civilians without papers or with papers which had already expired, stateless persons, and others enjoying right of asylum.

(c) *Political refugees*, whose lives were in danger in their own country and who also enjoyed the right of asylum.

(d) *Persons passing through*, i. e. various civilians temporarily harboured in Switzerland ¹.

These cases were entrusted, from 1942, to a separate Section, and no longer to the Agency's National Sections, for practical reasons and to remain in close contact with the Swiss authorities concerned, in particular the Federal Commissariat for Internment and Accommodation, the competent military authority for internment.

The duties of the Internment Section were the following :

(1) To receive and enter in card-indexes the information on military or civilian internees supplied by the responsible Swiss Authorities, or gathered from private sources.

In the case of military internees the Section itself sent identity cards bearing the ICRC heading to internment camps, for completion. These were accepted by the Swiss authorities as equivalent to the capture-cards used in belligerent countries. The Section further received from these authorities lists of transfers indicating changes of camp, removals to hospital and escapes, and also death certificates.

As regards civilians the Swiss authorities, on a request from the ICRC, sent the Agency copy of the identity card as filled up by each civilian refugee on entering Switzerland.

¹ The total number of refugees who came into Switzerland between the beginning of the war and December 31, 1946, amounted to 295,381 (103,869 members of the forces, 124,963 civilians and 66,549 persons passing through the country).

On the basis of this information the Internment Section kept military and civilian card-indexes, arranged according to nationality, up to date. In line with other special Sections it made out liaison cards for the National Sections concerned.

Communication of death certificates to the home countries of internees did not devolve on the Internment Section, but on the National Sections of the Agency.

(2) Reply to various enquiries made by internees or by their relatives.

When information in the Section's card-indexes was insufficient, enquiries were sent to National Red Cross Societies or to other organizations.

(3) Transmission of messages exchanged between internees and refugees and their relatives.

In exceptional cases, when internees and refugees could not correspond direct with their relatives owing to the suspension of postal communications between Switzerland and a particular country, permission was given for the use of the civilian message form, reserved in principle for exchange of news between civilians of enemy countries.

(4) Supply, on the request of the persons concerned, of official certificates of internment, to allow former internees to obtain arrears of pay, disablement indemnities, or relief allowances.

* * *

Up to 1943, the staff consisted of only two persons. The French internees of the 45th Army Corps, who came into Switzerland in June 1940, returned home after a short time, and the Section's main work at first consisted therefore in looking after the 13,000 Poles who came in at the same time and who remained in Switzerland until the war had ended. After January 1943, however, an increasingly large number of foreign civilians were allowed to enter Switzerland, and their identity cards were sent to the Central Agency.

The events of September 1943 in Italy accounted for the big development of the Section. A large number of British, Greek and Yugoslav service men, taking advantage of the collapse of the Italian forces, left their prison camps and succeeded in reaching Switzerland, followed shortly afterwards by a much larger number of Italians soldiers and civilians. In view of this influx of new refugees and the increase of work which it meant for the Section, the staff had to be considerably enlarged. It thus rose, in March 1944, to twenty-seven and at the moment of its greatest expansion, it had as many as forty-seven assistants.

During 1945 it was possible for almost all military internees and most civilian refugees to be repatriated. The Swiss authorities regularly sent the Internment Section nominal lists of service men repatriated and individual repatriation cards of civilian refugees. These repatriations had the effect of greatly reducing the work of the Section, which from September 1, 1945, ceased to exist ; its card-indexes were then divided amongst the various National Sections. However, up to the close of 1946, a secretariat of two persons continued to maintain liaison between the Agency's National Sections and the Swiss official bodies for treatment of special cases, and in particular for requests of certificates, as mentioned above.

Dispersed Families

One of the significant features of the later years of the recent war was the migration of large numbers of people from their own homes, under compulsion of many kinds ; some were captured by the enemy, some fled before the invaders, some had their homes devastated by the war : others were evacuated by order of the national or the occupying authorities, and there was also uprooting of populations and their resettlement, mass requisitions of labour, voluntary or forced emigration, and finally deportations for political reasons or on racial grounds.

These displaced people were, in large communities or singly, scattered to all points of the compass, without regard for law or order. Sometimes the injunction fell on a whole region ; sometimes individual persons were suddenly obliged to leave their homes and abandon their families who, in their turn and under the stress of other circumstances, were often swept away to unknown destinations.

The consequences of tearing these people away from their homes and thus breaking up family life, were further aggravated by the fact that the people so displaced found it difficult, if not impossible, to give any news of themselves for long periods. The disruption of family and other vital ties was inhuman and sometimes irreparable. It was essential therefore that effective measures should be taken to save a situation which might prove disastrous to thousands of people.

The ICRC has always considered that one of its principal duties in war time is to try to maintain and to re-establish family ties between persons separated by the events of war. In addition to work in behalf of PW, the Agency was concerned

with the problem of making search for the addresses of these civilians or their place of internment, or of forwarding news of them to their relatives. The account of the growth of that work and of the efforts of the Agency in behalf of several millions of civilians scattered throughout the world, is already known. The search for dispersed families was thus well within the general scope of the Agency's work.

* * *

In July 1943, the ICRC instructed the Central Agency to devise a standard enquiry card, by which persons who had been obliged to leave their home on account of the war could register and give details of members of their family whom they wished to trace. This was the card known as P 10,027. Whereas the ICRC was fully aware of the difficulties in store, it could not foresee at the time how far this enquiry card would be available to deported civilians and others who had had to flee the country. It was foreseen that in certain countries it would be necessary to await the end of the war before the displaced persons could complete the cards. However, the Committee took the view that all things considered, the system was the most suitable for the various categories of persons it was intended to help.

The usefulness of a card-index depends on its being complete in detail. The first problem was that of getting word to these dispersed people that they should register at Geneva and further, of convincing them that it was in their own interests to do this. The ICRC therefore decided to make the scheme known by a circular letter, on Dec. 1, 1943, to all National Red Cross Societies and other national or international organizations, which were likely to give practical help. It also sent details of the arrangement to its delegations abroad in order that they might inform Government authorities and ask for their support in the issue of the registration cards and in making known their use.

The Committee met with encouragement in its efforts by the replies it received and by the support given to it. A great many Red Cross Societies and organizations asked for supplies

of P 10,027 cards, printed in various languages, and by the spring of 1944, cards duly filled in began to reach the Agency.

In April 1944, at the request of AMGOT (Allied Military Government in Occupied Territories), the Committee sent a member of staff from the Agency on a mission to North Africa, Southern Italy, and Cairo. The object of his journey was to get in touch with refugee aid organizations in these countries and, with the help of Card P 10,027, to make a return of the number of the refugees and record the names of those from whom they were separated.

Thanks to the courtesy of certain Governments, cards were made available to the public in post offices. Supplies were also distributed to the offices which had been set up in some countries for the issue and forwarding of Red Cross Civilian Message forms. Local branches of Red Cross Societies, the centres set up by organizations such as the International Migration Service, the International Refugee Organization, and refugee relief centres also received supplies.

At the request of the ICRC, the International Postal Union granted free postage for the cards, a great advantage to senders.

The despatch of the cards to Geneva when filled in, either separately or collectively, met with difficulties in certain countries and for various reasons. When cards could not be sent by the usual postal route, the Committee's delegates consulted the authorities and the censorship offices as to other means of despatch, such, for instance, as the employment of special messengers.

The cards were only intended to be put to effective use when the war had ended. The plan was then to set about extensive searches in Germany and the German occupied territories. Nevertheless, the ICRC considered that the making of a central card-index for dispersed persons should not be delayed, and that it should be ready to serve its purpose as soon as circumstances allowed. To this end, a separate section, the Dispersed Families Section, was set up at the Central Agency.

From the start, the ICRC was aware of the need to assemble in one card-index all information and enquiries relative to members of dispersed families of all nationalities : in its opinion,

that was the only means of constructing a reliable record. The criterion of nationality generally used in the work of the Agency would, as far as displaced persons were concerned, no doubt prove a very unreliable basis of classification. Many of these persons and refugees in particular, had motives for concealing their nationality and even for claiming a nationality which they considered would be more advantageous to them. Therefore, a single international card-index, even if its construction entailed much difficulty, appeared to the ICRC as the only rational solution.

One of the principal difficulties which arose in setting up a central card-index resided in the fact that it was not possible to foresee future events and world conditions at the close of hostilities. The number of displaced persons in Europe at that time was estimated at 20 or 30 millions, and it was foreseen that the index would have to be greatly expanded if the scheme were accepted by all countries. This opinion was confirmed by events ; it did not seem that the European situation could develop with such rapidity and it could be assumed that displaced families in the occupied territories, separated by the fighting zones, would make extensive use of the registration card to become reunited. It was therefore necessary to provide all useful machinery, even if adjustments had to be made as the situation changed.

When forming the Dispersed Families Section, the Committee's sole aim was to re-establish contact between scattered members of a family. The field of its work had then to be limited to members of dispersed families—hence the name of the Section—and could not include all "displaced persons". With this in view, and in order to define clearly the term "dispersed families", the rule was laid down that the person making the enquiry and the person whose whereabouts were being sought must (1) both have left their usual residence and be unable so return home by their own efforts ; (2) be separated by a frontier and unaware of each other's address. The ICRC was still faced with a big task, as the number of persons belonging to dispersed families could not be precisely estimated, although it might be presumed that it would reach several million.

As soon as the Section had been set up, the National Sections of the Agency were instructed to communicate to it all cases of dispersed families in their files, in order to make the card-index of the section as comprehensive as possible.

The value of the central card-index under construction lay in the fact that it included all nationalities, but it was precisely in the making of this index that the problems arose. In some cases, members of the same family were living in different countries, of which they had become nationals and to the language of which they had adopted the spelling of their names. There were instances of five different nationalities within one family and several different spellings of the family name. To ensure that cards relating to the same family would come together in the index, a system of phonetic filing was needed, whereby all cards of the same name were assembled, whether they were Slav, Latin, Teutonic or English. Specialists were appointed to draft, on the basis of the experience gained by the Agency in this field, rules for the adaptation of the various pronunciations to French phonetic spelling.

Other difficulties were caused by illegible writing, bad spelling, incomplete or forged identity papers and the unknown origin of many small children.

Alphabetic and phonetic filing in one index had therefore to include the possibility of other filing methods at a later date, for instance, by nationality, place of origin, last residence, etc. The dispersed families card-index was therefore set up in duplicate, one on Watson Business Machine cards, in order to permit future re-arrangement.

* * *

As soon as UNRRA was formed at Atlantic City, in November 1943, the ICRC got in touch with this organization and informed it of the action taken by the Committee to solve the problem here discussed. The Director of UNRRA took formal notice of the communication on Dec. 14, 1943.

In the course of the subsequent negotiations, UNRRA asked the ICRC to operate as a central tracing bureau. This task

was accepted by the ICRC in the belief that it was being called upon to centralize the work of the national tracing bureaux set up by UNRRA.

Meanwhile, the ICRC, during a conference with UNRRA in Paris in the summer of 1945, was invited to come to an agreement whereby the Committee should, as soon as the military authorities gave their sanction, be ready to distribute its registration and tracing cards to the administrative officers of the Displaced Persons camps, especially those in Germany. Indeed, by far the largest number of DPs who had not yet been able to register with Geneva were presumed to be in Germany. This distribution however excluded former enemies, and could be made only to members of the Allied nations who had lost all trace of their family and who did not wish or could not return to their home country. The ICRC agreed to undertake this work, which was in line with its own earnest desire to extend its scheme for helping dispersed families ; at the time it stressed its regret that a whole category of DPs were thus excluded from the issue of P 10,027 cards.

On the strength of the arrangement concluded with UNRRA, the Agency arranged for the first million of these cards to be printed on a revised two-leaf pattern ; it had them conveyed to Germany with printed instructions to those in charge of the camps, together with the translation in several languages of the details printed on the cards.

The ICRC had now only to await the moment when it could begin the distribution in bulk of these cards in Germany, in accordance with the agreement reached in Paris.

The sanction of the Allied Military Authorities for the issue of the cards was however a long time in coming, despite repeated applications by the ICRC. Finally, UNRRA set up a Central Tracing Bureau, at the beginning of 1946 at Frankfurt, which was later transferred to Arolsen, near Cassel, in the American Zone. The Allies recognized this Bureau as the sole competent body for dealing with cases of DP, thus including dispersed families in the arrangement.

The ICRC thus found that the project had been abruptly taken out of its hands, although in its opinion it was better

equipped than any other organization to carry out the scheme, on the grounds that it was a neutral body recognized throughout the world and therefore clearly in the best position to centralize information on dispersed people in all parts of the globe. There was now no prospect that the efforts of the Committee over a period of two years, could reach their aim, since there remained no likelihood that the Agency could issue the P 10,027 cards in Germany, where there was the greatest call for its scheme and where displaced persons, evacuated people, foreign workers and inmates in refugee camps amounted to millions. Had the ICRC been able to use in Germany the system it had devised, it can be claimed with some assurance that it would have obtained far-reaching results. In proof of this, mention need only be made of the Committee's action after the end of the war in distributing P 10,079 cards, designed to enable German families to get into touch again with relatives who were PW.

It therefore only remained for the ICRC to make the best use of the data in its possession, in order to give aid at least to those people whom it had undertaken to help. This was accomplished by co-operation with the UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau and by forwarding to it such information as continued to reach Geneva.

These are the statistics, up to the end of March 1946, of P 10,027 cards which reached Geneva duly filled in :

1944	76,300
1945	155,948
1946 (to March 31).	14,996
Total	<u>247,244</u>

These figures imply double the number of cases. The total number of cards printed, and in part actually issued was over three million.

The Section stopped work on card-indexing cases on April 1, 1946. The card-index made with Watson Business Machines cards was arranged alphabetically according to nationalities and placed in the records of the Central Agency. The cards of

the other index, comprising in particular P 10,027 cards filled in and returned, were filed in the indexes of the appropriate National Sections, which continued to deal with cases in arrears.

National Sections which were still receiving fresh enquiries, thereafter advised the senders to apply to the National Tracing Bureaux which UNRRA had set up in the various countries ¹. The organizations interested in the matter were at the same time asked to discontinue despatch of such enquiries to the Agency, and to ensure that in future no more P 10,027 cards were distributed or completed. The ICRC then acted as the national Bureau for Switzerland.

The general public having been inadequately informed of the existence of the Central Tracing Bureau and the National Bureaux, the Central Agency still received in the course of the following months, a large number of enquiries and of P 10,027 cards. The National Red Cross Societies were therefore requested, in June 1946, to publish the necessary information in the press.

* * *

In July 1947, the International Refugee Organization took over from UNRRA all work in respect of DPs and the part of the ICRC in tracing and reuniting dispersed families was at an end.

¹ The Central Tracing Bureau set up by UNRRA had undertaken to deal with cases of stateless persons and with all those with which the National Tracing Bureaux could not deal.

A FEW FIGURES CONCERNING THE CENTRAL AGENCY AS ON JUNE 30, 1947

NUMBER OF CARDS in the Indexes.

Austrian	480,000
Baltic	44,000
Belgian	590,000
British	1,811,000
Bulgarian	5,000
Colonial (French)	525,000
Czechoslovak	82,000
Dutch	289,000
Finnish	2,000
French	5,893,000
German	9,451,000
Greek	125,000
Hungarian	337,000
IMPA	144,000
Internment in Switzerland	56,000
Italian	4,906,000
Japanese	208,000
Polish	780,000
Rumanian	119,000
Scandinavian	50,000
Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American	38,000
Sundry cases	115,000
U.S.A.	477,000
U.S.S.R.	215,000
Watson	8,574,000
Yugoslav	682,000

MAIL ITEMS

Received	54,500,000
Despatched	50,400,000*

* Including 23,858,000 twenty-five-word Messages.

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XVIIth INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE
Stockholm, August 1948

REPORT
of the
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on its activities
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(September 1, 1939 ~ June 30, 1947)

VOLUME III
RELIEF ACTIVITIES



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1202 GENEVE

INTRODUCTION

The relief work carried out by the ICRC during the Second World War can, quite fairly, be held as without precedent. Although the enterprise as a whole was a novel one, it nevertheless followed certain traditions which should have at least brief mention.

Not many years after the foundation of the ICRC in 1863-1864, during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, an Information Bureau for Prisoners of War was opened at Basle, with the object of assembling information on men reported missing. This office, which in a way anticipated the future Central Prisoners of War Agency at Geneva was, it is not surprising, called upon to send on not only news but also medicaments, dressings and even a few food parcels and packages of books made up in Switzerland. As the Franco-Prussian war lasted only a few months and was moreover fought over a limited area, these early relief schemes set afoot by the ICRC were very limited in extent.

Contrary to the general impression, relief schemes were still on a reduced scale in the first World War. The conflict, it is true, lasted for much longer than in 1870 : it also affected many more countries and caused far greater slaughter. The number of prisoners taken, however, cannot be compared with the vast number of men and women captured or arrested for various reasons during the Second World War. In 1914-1918, too, the relative stability of the fronts enabled belligerents to maintain intact most of their railway and postal systems. Thus, National Red Cross Societies and other humanitarian organizations

could themselves undertake to aid both the wounded and sick, and the prisoners of war. The help of the ICRC was not required in this field, as relief supplies arrived at their destination direct by the normal channels. In Switzerland, too, it was the shipping agencies that undertook the despatch by rail of relief supplies to the belligerent countries. The ICRC merely entrusted to them the transport of 1,813 wagons of collective gifts. The Committee further organized, by arrangement with the Swiss Postal Service, the despatch by mail of 1,884,914 individual parcels. This was a straightforward job and did not even require a separate department to deal with it.

During the three armed conflicts of the years 1918 to 1939 — the Abyssinian War, the early stage of the Sino-Japanese War, and the Spanish Civil War — the belligerents turned to the ICRC for relief in kind. This was a new departure which may be welcomed or regretted ; it may be thought, on the one hand, to carry an implicit recognition of the great part international organizations may play in saving lives ; on the other, it might be regarded as a foretaste of " total war " which, clearly, makes necessary a recourse to such organizations.

The ICRC, whose invariable policy is to support all schemes with a humanitarian purpose, did not give much thought to the theoretical and legal aspect of the problem put before it. Its sole wish was to respond to these appeals, to the best of its ability, either by soliciting and collecting gifts in aid, or by itself purchasing and distributing relief supplies on its own account. The ICRC thus sent medicaments and medical equipment to the value of some 76,000 Swiss francs during the Abyssinian War, and during the Sino-Japanese War made use of 86,525 Swiss francs for a similar purpose. In the Spanish Civil War, a large number of donors made their gifts for the benefit of both sides, and the ICRC was therefore able to purchase not only medicaments, but also food-supplies and garments. The Committee handed over to both Government and Nationalist forces goods to the value of 337,921 and 332,923 Swiss francs respectively. Immediately after the Civil War those districts which had suffered most in the fighting received 17,980 Swiss francs worth of relief in kind.

Some of these consignments were not on a large scale, but they served the purpose—and therein lay their importance—of drawing the attention of the ICRC itself and of other humanitarian organizations, in particular the National Red Cross Societies, to the necessity of similar schemes. The Purchase Section set up during the Spanish war was, it should be noted, not dissolved; in 1939 it formed the nucleus of the Committee's Relief Department.

No comparison, however, can be drawn between the operations, limited in scope, to which reference has just been made, and the vast work of relief undertaken by the ICRC between 1939 and 1947 in behalf of unprecedented numbers of prisoners of war and internees of every category, as well as of the civil population in many countries. This work immediately took on almost alarming proportions for those on whom it devolved. When it reached its peak between 1943 and 1944, with 2,000 wagons coming and going each month, the ICRC had become the biggest relief distribution centre on the continent.

The Committee's relief work during the Second World War may be divided into four main headings.

(1) Regular bulk consignments in Europe, from 1939 to 1945, to some two million Allied PW and civilian internees placed on the same footing as PW. These consignments amounted to close on 400 million kilograms, valued at about three thousand million Swiss francs. Smaller relief consignments were also sent to Allied prisoners and civilian internees in the Far East.

(2) Occasional consignments, whenever the need became urgent, to about one million German and Italian PW and civilian internees, out of a total number of two and a half to three million. Such consignments were most frequent in the period immediately after the end of the war in 1945 and 1946.

(3) Relatively small consignments to some 300,000 civilian deportees and internees of all kinds, the exact number of whom is unknown, but estimated at well over a million.

(4) Large consignments to civilian victims of the war, particularly those supplies despatched by the ICRC in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies through the Joint Relief Commission. The recipients were either specified categories of persons (children, women, the aged, the sick and disabled), or inhabitants of areas that had particularly suffered as a result of military operations: such were the Channel Islands, the French Atlantic coast after the Allied invasion in 1944, and the western provinces of Holland at the beginning of 1945. Relief was also sent to Pruzskow Camp, which held a large proportion of the Warsaw population, to the children of Paris in 1940, to those of Berlin and of Vienna from 1945 to 1947, and to other victims of the war. The principal relief scheme in behalf of civilians was certainly that carried out in Greece, when all normal supply routes by the Mediterranean were cut off after the campaign of 1940-1941.

PART I

RELIEF WORK BY THE ICRC FOR PRISONERS OF WAR AND DETAINEES OF ALL CATEGORIES

GENERAL PROBLEMS

Chapter 1

From the Polish Campaign to the Invasion of Western Europe

The first phase of the hostilities which opened on September 1, 1939, with the lightning campaign against Poland, entailed the capture of over half a million men in twenty-two days. At the end of only a few weeks, the ICRC and the National Red Cross Societies found themselves faced with an unprecedented task. It immediately became clear that this mass of Polish prisoners would need relief supplies, despite the provisions of Article 11 of the 1929 Convention relating to the treatment of PW¹. In order to give them practical help, their identity, number and places of internment had to be known. Without waiting for information on these points, the ICRC sent trial consignments for the first three or four months.

At the same time, many other war victims called for the attention of the Committee, namely (1) some thousands of British, French and German prisoners taken on the Western

¹ See Vol. I, p. 253.

Front, along the Franco-German boundary line from Basle to the Belgian frontier ; (2) civilians of enemy nationality interned in belligerent countries, whose status, under bilateral agreements made in 1939 and 1940, was equivalent to that of PW¹ ; (3) sick and wounded combatants. It was also necessary to collect, despatch and distribute gifts for civil populations, and to seek and co-ordinate the support of National Red Cross Societies in neutral countries. The rapid march of events called for prompt measures. The ICRC was, as a rule, obliged to improvise relief schemes which could only later be organized on the juridical basis of the 1929 Convention, or of common law.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIGNMENTS

The work of relief began with the despatch of individual parcels addressed by name to PW. As soon as they were able to get in touch once more with the outer world, thousands of Polish officers and men in captivity asked for food, tobacco, medicaments, underwear, footwear and uniforms. Hardly three or four weeks after the outbreak of war their names became known to their relatives, to some National Red Cross Societies and to several private relief organizations.

There was no question as yet of averting starvation for masses of people whom the Detaining Power could no longer feed as required by the Conventions. The International Committee was simply giving individual help to prisoners who looked for some alleviation of their lot. The first camp visits carried out in October 1939 showed, however, that a very large number of PW who had lost their belongings at the time of capture were extremely short of underwear. They also needed medicaments and pharmaceutical supplies. Most of them also asked for extra food and tobacco.

A first achievement was made when the ICRC, either direct or through National Red Cross Societies or Government authorities, was able to inform relatives and relief organizations of

¹ See Vol. I, p. 573.

the articles that could be sent to the camps and the routes by which they should be despatched.

In accordance with the Cairo Postal Convention of 1935, the Swiss Post Office carried free of charge all parcels originating in, or in transit through Switzerland, which were intended for PW in Germany, France and the British Commonwealth. Individual parcels could be sent in two ways: (1) they could be forwarded direct by post. The Swiss Postal administration states that as early as the year 1939, 388 parcels were posted in Switzerland and 3,478 passed in transit ¹. (2) Parcels could also be sent through the ICRC. The Committee stated at the outbreak of war that it was prepared to accept parcels from prisoners' families bearing only the address " ICRC, Geneva ", and to forward them after checking, completing or correcting the postal addresses of the recipients.

The Postal Transit Section set up by the ICRC forwarded 47 parcels in October 1939, 377 in November (an increase due to Christmas parcels), and 99 in December. These figures include parcels from Switzerland and abroad. In 1940, the work of the Section grew steadily but continued to be on a very small scale (34 parcels despatched in January and 1,295 in December 1940). In succeeding years, figures for monthly despatches varied considerably, for reasons which will be examined below ², but between 1941 and 1945 an average of 1,000 was maintained.

The following figures give the annual totals of postal despatches, comprising parcels in transit, those sent from Switzerland and those forwarded by the ICRC :

1940 . . .	1,224,614 parcels
1941 . . .	8,110,756 "
1942 . . .	14,690,625 "
1943 . . .	13,823,295 "
1944 . . .	5,719,956 "
1945 . . .	555,101 "

¹ Figures given in the 1945 Postal Yearbook.

² See below p. 181.

This shows that the number of parcels increased considerably between 1940 and 1942, remained at a very high level in 1943 and subsequently declined. During 1944, the individual parcels sent from France decreased in number and then stopped entirely after the Allied landings in France. Generally speaking, there was an increase in collective parcels as against those addressed to individuals, which were exposed to greater risks. The sharp decrease in 1945 was due to the dislocation of railway transport, and, above all, to the ending of the war in Europe in May.

Such matters as the maximum weight of parcels, methods of packing, form of address and prohibited articles were the subject of negotiations pursued by the ICRC with the authorities and Red Cross Societies of all belligerent and neutral countries concerned. These negotiations lasted from October 1939 until April 1940, and on certain disputed points continued until the war ended. Moreover, the rules adopted had to be revised on several occasions, when events had brought about a change in the conditions governing the despatch and receipt of relief supplied.

Parcels up to five, and, in exceptional cases, twenty kilos in weight were accepted for transit through Switzerland for PW and civilian internees. In Great Britain 5 kilos was the maximum weight allowed; in France it was at first two kilos and later increased to five kilos. The German military authorities who wished to fix the maximum weight at 20 kilos, reduced it to 5 kilos also. This standard of 5 kilos established by common consent, was successfully maintained throughout the war. At the beginning of 1942, however, it was somewhat relaxed in order to enable heavy articles to be sent, such as winter clothing, greatcoats, books in several volumes; parcels of this kind were thenceforth allowed up to 10 kilos.

A few months after relief work had begun, all belligerents were induced to adopt a standard list of prohibited articles, likely to facilitate escape or sabotage; these included:

Coins and bank-notes.

Civilian clothing, and underwear which could be used as civilian clothing (except sweaters and pullovers).

Arms and instruments which could be used as weapons
(large knives, scissors, etc.).

Duplicators, carbon paper and tracing paper.

Compasses, maps, cameras, field glasses, magnifying glasses,
electric torches, telephone apparatus.

Wireless transmitting and receiving sets, and spare parts.
Alcoholic drinks.

Acids and chemical products.

Books and newspapers of a political or military character,
or of suspect contents.

Used wrappings ; books with maps ; matches.

Whilst all the above articles were forbidden by the common consent of the belligerents, others were the subject of controversy. The following were the main articles in dispute :

(1) Since lemon juice can apparently be used as invisible ink, bottled liquids and in particular fruit juices were at first under the ban, but this was later raised in the case of standard collective parcels.

(2) Unlike the Allied authorities, who never made objections to this sort of article, the German authorities prohibited tubes of toothpaste and cream, as possible receptacles for secret messages. Protests against this decision proved fruitless ; the Italian authorities, however, were more reasonable.

(3) Tin openers, at first classified as edged and therefore banned tools, were finally allowed in collective parcels.

(4) Salt and pepper at first went through without trouble, but were later often confiscated in German camps, because escaping PW sometimes used them to blind their guards. They were subsequently allowed in collective, but not in individual parcels.

(5) Medicaments called for special precautions. A PW in free possession of drugs runs serious risks, if he takes them without medical supervision ; there is also a temptation to traffic in them, or to hoard them for no particular purpose, whilst some fellow-prisoners might be in urgent need of them.

The ICRC observed that these objections were often well-founded. After consultation with the Detaining Powers, the donors and certain neutral experts, the Committee proposed to belligerents that they should forbid the direct despatch of medicaments in individual parcels and, above all, in those sent by next of kin. This was, in a sense, a restriction of the right given to PW under Art. 37 of the Geneva Convention, but the men were not in fact the losers thereby. Though parcels of this kind had to be addressed to the senior medical officer, the camp leader or the representative of a Red Cross Society, they could also bear the name of the real addressee. Furthermore, this rule did not prevent many PW from receiving throughout their captivity boxes labelled, for example, "Cough Lozenges", or bottles of supposed "Anti-flu" which actually contained some kind of alcohol. These articles were distributed or confiscated according to the strictness of the camp censorship.

While consignments from Red Cross Societies and other relief organizations were in general carefully packed, the same could not be said of family parcels. Damage and loss due solely to defective packing were therefore heavy. Foodstuffs and clothing were too often mixed up together, and the state in which these parcels arrived after a long journey, which included several trans-shipments, can easily be imagined. Thus losses were as much as 20 per cent for the parcels containing uniforms, honey and salami sausage, sent by Italian families to their men in India, and carried in the hold through tropical waters. Such misfortunes were not wholly due to negligence or inexperience on the part of the senders; after 1942, they had increasing difficulty in obtaining packing materials, especially in the countries occupied by Germany and Italy.

Several National Red Cross Societies attempted some improvement and undertook the onerous task of forwarding all family parcels themselves, after checking the contents and re-packing. This method, which had excellent results, was used throughout the war by the American, British and German Red Cross Societies. It could not be adopted, however, by the Italian Red Cross, nor in Poland, Yugoslavia or occupied

Greece. The French Red Cross preferred an intermediary system described in Chapter 2.

While all belligerents vouchsafed the postal address, i.e. the exact place of detention, of civilian internees, the location of PW camps was kept secret. In Germany and Great Britain, collective and individual parcels for PW had therefore to be addressed to camps described merely by numbers. Thus, the first German camps heard of outside that country, and to which parcels were sent, were "Oflags" (*Offizierslager*) X A and XI A, and "Stalags" (*Mannschafts-Stammlager*) III and IV A, where on October 19, 1939, there were 4,545 Polish PW in all¹. This relatively small number was due to the fact that, at this period, very large numbers of men were still temporarily held in the territory at that time called the "General-Government of Poland".

In Great Britain, there were at this time two German PW camps, described as No. 1 and No. 2. In France, all parcels had to be addressed to a postal centre in Paris which forwarded them to their destination.

It can legitimately be argued that PW are entitled to receive an unlimited number of individual parcels, since Art. 37 of the Convention says nothing to the contrary. There were, however, such vast numbers of Polish prisoners after the capitulation of their army that the German High Command, in order to avoid congestion in the post offices and censorship, as it stated, placed an arbitrary limit on the number of individual parcels sent from occupied Poland to PW transferred to Germany. All parcels therefore had to bear labels previously issued to each PW and sent by him to his relatives. This system was soon known outside Poland, but when the ICRC questioned the German

¹ In its letter to the German High Command, of October 19, 1939, the ICRC gave these facts and asked for full lists of camp strengths and for confirmation of the fact that camp numbers represented an adequate address to which relief supplies could be sent. In their reply of October 25, the German Command gave precise details on the following points: (a) acceptance in principle of the despatch of books; (b) form of address for parcels; (c) free carriage for consignments; (d) extension where applicable of these facilities to consignments for civilian internees. The place of detention of the internees would be communicated later.

Authorities the latter answered that the measure applied exclusively to senders residing in the "General-Government" ¹.

COLLECTIVE CONSIGNMENTS

During the first weeks of the war individual consignments from private donors greatly exceeded other types. It soon became obvious to the ICRC, to National Red Cross Societies and several other organizations, that it was essential to supplement these by collective relief. Of the Polish PW in Germany at the beginning of December 1939, some 250,000 could expect no help whatever from their relatives, since these either had lost their lives or were themselves destitute. It also seemed likely that a high proportion of the 150,000 Poles captured by the Soviet forces were no better off.

During the trial period of consignments, no clear distinction was made between individual and collective relief. The ICRC realized at the outset, however, that the despatch of thousands of individual parcels in lots, and of tens of thousands of collective parcels, besides goods in bulk, required the most careful preparation and involved not only technical, but also economic and political considerations. Before even studying means of transport, the ICRC had to know to what extent the countries concerned would find it compatible with their war economy to export large quantities of foodstuffs and clothing, for humanitarian purposes.

The first collective relief consignments were despatched from Switzerland. For these, the Polish PW were indebted to the Polish Consulate in Geneva, the Ukraino-Swiss Committee and Working Centre, and the "Pro Polonia" Association in Geneva, as well as to many individuals who gave funds to the ICRC for this purpose. The first gift for French PW was provided by the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in France, and a second by the Swiss Chocolate Convention. It was due in the

¹ For further details of labels, see pp. 281-283. For complaints which the ICRC had to transmit on the non-arrival of parcels, see pp. 177-179.

first place to the British Women's Wartime Work in Geneva that the ICRC was able to assist British prisoners, and the same applied to German prisoners, thanks to the German Consulate-General in Geneva. The Brazilian Red Cross was the first overseas donor. In February 1940, this Society sent the ICRC thirty tons of sugar, of which fifteen were for Polish prisoners and fifteen for hospitals in Poland. In March 1940, eighteen tons of coffee followed, half for sick and wounded PW still in Poland and half for the civilian population of that country.

These first donors requested the ICRC to send either lots of individual parcels, or collective shipments addressed to camp leaders. Thus, at the request of the German Consulate-General, on December 21, 1939, 40 Christmas parcels of a total weight of 47 kilos and 160 parcels weighing 187 kilos were sent to Camps No. 1 and No. 2 in Great Britain, whilst 100 parcels of a total weight of 117 kilos were sent to the Postal Centre for Prisoners of War in Paris, which had charge of their distribution in France. The next day, December 22, 100 parcels, of a total weight of 249 kilos, were despatched; they were sent by the Polish Consulate-General to the camp leader of the Polish PW in Stalag XVIIIB in Germany. Finally on December 23, 4,000 parcels provided by the Ukraino-Swiss Committee and Working Centre were sent to the camp leader of the Polish PW in Oflag X B in Germany.

All these shipments were made by transport firms and arrived safely. In October and November, the ICRC satisfied itself that a camp leader had been appointed in each camp and that he was authorized to receive and distribute collective consignments, under Art. 43 of the 1929 PW Convention. The ICRC Delegation in London forwarded the receipts from German PW to Geneva at the beginning of 1940; the Poles acknowledged receipt direct on January 8 and 16. These consignments are quoted as an instance and were followed up by others no less successful.

The first difficulties arose over the despatch, on April 15, 1940, of 300 parcels bought with funds entrusted to the ICRC for Polish PW in Oflag II C. The camp leader informed the

ICRC on April 23, that this camp would in future bear the number XI B ; the receipt which reached Geneva on May 24 showed that a certain Oflag IX B had been transferred to Oflag XI A. As the receipt was signed by the same leader, it at least proved that the consignment had reached its destination, despite these changes in numbering.

Similar incidents occurred frequently, and showed at the outset the importance of accurate and up-to-date information about the strength and location of PW camps. The Detaining Power was bound to supply such particulars, but when, as in Germany, it had to deal with some hundreds of thousands of men captured within a few weeks, the task proved indeed formidable.

The relief supplies referred to above were bought in Switzerland and exported with the consent of the Swiss Government. It was, however, further necessary to obtain certain exemptions from the measures of economic warfare introduced by the belligerents. The measures taken by the British and American blockade authorities subsequently had such far-reaching effects on food supplies for Allied PW in Europe that it has been held preferable to review them as a whole in the following chapter.

The first collective parcels contained mainly foodstuffs and toilet articles. The ICRC also transmitted, from 1939 onwards, books and games supplied by the World Alliance of YMCA. Consignments of clothing soon followed. One of the first requests for relief came from the German commandant of Oflag II D, who reported on September 18, 1939, that a thousand French officers in that camp needed uniforms and expected them either in individual parcels from their relatives or in collective parcels from the French Government. It should be remembered in this connection that although Art. 12 of the 1929 PW Convention lays on Detaining Powers the obligation to supply PW with clothing, it makes no mention of spare under-clothing, nor of regulation uniforms. However, Germany on the one hand, and France and Great Britain on the other, always agreed tacitly that prisoners could receive these articles individually or collectively from their home country.

In 1939 and in the early months of 1940, there were but few British PW, and the number of British civilian internees in Germany did not exceed 120. Nevertheless, in November 1939, the British Red Cross submitted to the German High Command, through the ICRC, a list of various types of standard collective parcels, on the model of those adopted during the years 1914-1918. Both the British and the American Red Cross made the widest use of these subsequently. They were as follows :

Large-sized case of medicaments for camps.

Medium-sized case of medicaments for camps.

Standard food parcel of seven kilos, made up according to four types A, B, C, D.

Medical parcel, type E.

Standard clothing parcel.

Without expressing any opinion on these proposals, the German military authorities confined themselves to supplying a list, on November 20, 1939, of prohibited articles. In 1940, when postal consignments were limited to a weight of 5 kilos, the types of parcel on the 1918 model had to be somewhat modified.

Thus it may be said that, four months after the outbreak of hostilities, the steps taken and the initial practical experience gained by the ICRC had already determined the general shape of future relief schemes. The individual and collective relief consignments provided for in the 1929 PW Convention had the consent of all belligerents. The French, British and German Authorities and Red Cross Societies were aware that it was their responsibility to send uniforms, underwear, foodstuffs, tobacco, medicaments, toilet articles, books and games to their own nationals in PW or internment camps. They also knew that the ICRC was able to forward all these items, either by individual postal packages or by collective parcels, and in all cases post free.

Moreover, relief organizations, and especially the National Red Cross Societies, were fully aware of the aid vitally required

by the hundreds of thousands of Poles who were in the hands of the enemy. A note dated December 19, 1939, specified the following needs in this connection per man :

- 1 shirt
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 pullover
- 1 face towel
- 1 cake of soap
- 1 pair of heavy boots for every ten men (high boots were preferable for officers).

The men further needed supplementary food, such as preserved meat and fish, chocolate and condensed milk. Finally, books and games were required, especially for the officers.

The note in question contained the following recommendations to donors : remove all manufacturer's labels or other indications from clothing ; prepare collective shipments according to camps ; send linen according to kind in cases or bales showing the number of articles ; limit the weight of parcels to 50 kilos. Those who did not wish to send parcels through the ICRC were asked to inform the Committee of the number, nature and date of their consignments, so that gifts from different sources might be shared out as fairly as possible. The note finally stated that, under Art. 43 of the Convention, the camp leaders appointed had the right to receive and distribute collective relief consignments and that, in particular, the clothing issued by them became the absolute property of the recipients. The latest list of camp strengths transmitted by the German military authorities was attached ; this recorded that 19,102 Polish officers and 370,164 NCOs and men were detained in Germany.

The success of this relief scheme was, however, mainly dependent on the help to be expected from the Polish Red Cross, re-organized on Allied territory, from the Red Cross Societies of countries allied to Poland, and from other relief organizations. After the trial consignments which, as stated above, were most encouraging, it became unhappily evident to the ICRC that

donations for the benefit of Polish prisoners were far below their needs. They did not reach a relatively satisfactory figure until after 1941, when the Polish Red Cross in London was set up, and relief societies in the United States had collected large quantities of money and goods.

It should be remembered that reciprocity always carried great weight in negotiations on assistance to PW and civilian internees. It was effective in the case of German prisoners and civilian internees in France and the British Commonwealth, and vice-versa. It was, however, absent from the outset as regards Polish prisoners, and the task of aiding them was, in consequence, far more difficult. However, this disadvantage only became apparent after some time, and especially after 1941 ¹.

¹ This subject is further discussed in the next chapter, where the case of similarly placed PW and civilian internees of other nationalities is reviewed.

Chapter 2

The Influx of Prisoners of War after the Campaigns in the West

During the first winter of the War, the ICRC had already launched its relief schemes. Those chiefly benefited at that time were the Poles captured in September 1939. The events of 1940 and 1941, such as the invasion of Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and France by the German forces, Italy's entry into the War, and the campaigns in the Balkans and Africa, soon made the Committee's work far more complex and onerous. The number of prisoners taken rose to about 1,700,000 French, 30,000 British and several hundred thousand Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians and Jugoslavs.

Very early, even before the need became urgent, it had been decided in all parts of the world to supply PW from outside, since it was to be presumed that neither Italy nor Germany would carry out in full the obligations laid upon Detaining Powers by Article 12 of the Geneva Convention. By the summer of 1940, however, it was manifest that the governments of these countries could not supply adequate food and clothing over an indefinite period to the two million men who had fallen into their hands, and whose pressing needs were apparent both from the reports by the Committee's delegates, and from countless appeals for help.

In response to the public concern, the Allied Governments, including those who had been forced to take refuge abroad, did all that was possible, with the help of the National Red Cross Societies, to protect their captive nationals from the hardships

and perils of cold and starvation. Their work, supported by donor groups in every continent, was of course not everywhere pursued along identical lines. One very important feature, however, was common to all schemes ; the fact that the ICRC and its delegates in belligerent countries were almost invariably entrusted with the task of taking delivery of relief supplies in Europe, of warehousing them on neutral soil, and of their distribution. This distribution, one should add, really involved only two channels of supply, since all Allied prisoners were in the hands either of Germany or of Italy.

From the outset of the war, reciprocity had been assured by the fact that there were German PW and civilian internees in the hands of the enemy. This circumstance benefited, however, only a small proportion of the military personnel who fell into the hands of the Axis forces in 1940. In fact, until the Allied landing in North Africa and the total occupation of France in November 1942, complete reciprocity only existed for German and Italian PW, on the one hand, and for the British and later, the Americans, on the other.

The French (after the Franco-German armistice), the Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians, Jugoslavs and Greeks, and in fact all those PW whose countries had been wholly or partially occupied by the enemy, found themselves in the same unfavourable conditions as the Poles had already experienced.

This situation led to difficulties which will be described below. In the first place, without compromising in any way its work for PW recognized as such, the ICRC claimed the right to give similar assistance to those who did not enjoy PW status, or who had been deprived of it by various expedients, such as so-called "release", followed by internment as civilians, or "conversion" into civilian workers.

Moreover, although the German authorities did not wholly prevent the despatch of relief to prisoners of this category, they could impose stricter regulations and hinder it to a great extent. Thus, as was remarked in the case of the Poles, the Germans introduced the unilateral label system which limited the number of individual parcels for any one man. Unauthorized consignments, too, had little chance of escaping con-

fiscation. Finally, camp leaders were refused many facilities which, although not stipulated in the Conventions, were nevertheless accorded to British and American spokesmen. These included the right to witness the arrival of consignments at railway stations, to check stocks, to be in touch with their colleagues in labour detachments and hospitals attached to their own camp, and to confer direct with the ICRC and the donors. Conditions varied greatly from one camp to another, according to the strictness of the commandants and censorship officials. But it may be said that, on the whole, Allied prisoners, who should all have received equal treatment, were in fact divided into the following categories :

- (1) British and American PW, who were privileged ;
- (2) French PW, who, in default of any reciprocity, had the benefit of special agreements deriving from the armistice (right of supervision by the Vichy Government, supervision and supply of relief by the Scapini Mission, etc.) ;
- (3) Norwegian PW, without the benefits of reciprocity, but treated with a certain amount of consideration, since they were classified as members of the Teutonic race ;
- (4) Belgian and Dutch PW, whose status was practically the same as that of the French ;
- (5) Greeks, Jugoslavs, Poles, and Jewish prisoners not of British or American nationality. These could not count on any reciprocity, and were moreover exposed to every kind of victimization, on grounds of racial policy.

In principle, every PW had the right to receive parcels, to sign receipts and to present complaints to the ICRC or its delegates, when the latter visited the camps. The camp leaders, however, in carrying out the distribution and supervision required by the ICRC and the donors, met with difficulties that varied according to their nationality.

The Allied authorities made no discrimination as between German and Italian PW, or between civilian internees of different nationalities, but they also on occasion resorted to vexatious measures. They held prisoners, for example, for an indefinite period in transit camps, thus preventing them from giving a permanent camp address to their next of kin ; they also sent PW to isolated regions, such as Morocco or East Africa, where they were cut off from any postal or other means of communication with the ICRC and its representatives, so that the camp leaders were unable to carry out their duties and the normal distribution of relief supplies was stopped.

In general, a distinction should be drawn between individual and collective relief consignments. The first encountered difficulties which were almost entirely technical, and arising chiefly from postal failures and the problem of verifying the addresses of some two million men. This question will be referred to again later ¹.

Collective consignments, on the other hand, raised many questions of principle, the most important of which will be broadly considered here, whilst technical details are dealt with in relation to the individual cases noted below ².

These questions were the following :

- (1) Organization of collective relief by the donors.
- (2) Effects of economic warfare upon the work of relief.
- (3) Role of the ICRC as a trustee and neutral intermediary for the forwarding and distributing of funds and relief supplies. This role involved :
 - (a) The right of ownership and the right to allocate and distribute goods ;
 - (b) The receipt of consignments ;
 - (c) The storing of supplies in Switzerland ;
 - (d) The storing of supplies in belligerent countries.

¹ See pp. 281 et seq.

² See pp. 207 et seq.

- (4) The arrival of relief supplies in camps, unloading, stocking and allocation.
- (5) Supervision of distribution.

1. Organization of Collective Relief by the Donors

When consulted on the subject by the donors, the ICRC, without entirely barring the non-standard parcel, advised them in their own as well as the prisoners' interest, and also to facilitate its own work, to standardize packing methods as far as possible.

The Vichy Government and the French Red Cross at first sent relief to their prisoners, numbering over a million, in very large bulk consignments. The Committee thus received entire wagonloads of foodstuffs in cases, some with homogeneous, others with assorted contents, and consignments of clothing which was simply stacked in the wagons. Gradually, the local branches of the French Red Cross organized the packing of standard or semi-standard parcels ¹. Although the contents of these parcels varied according to the state of the market, they nearly all included wartime bread, cigarettes, tinned meat and fish and a few other articles such as sugar, concentrated fruit juice, dried fruit and vegetables.

Medicaments were sent in the form of first-aid kits, made up according to instructions received from army medical officers in captivity, and from medical advisers to the Government and to the French Red Cross. Toilet articles were supplied as and when available.

The problem of clothing French PW was particularly intractable. The German authorities certainly distributed part of the stocks of French Army uniforms which they had seized as war booty, but on the several occasions when they were ques-

¹ The term "semi-standard" applies to parcels for which the packing material and the greater part of the contents were supplied to local branches of the Red Cross by the Government, and which could be supplemented by the families, up to a total weight of 4.6 kilos (roughly 10 lb).

tioned by the ICRC, they refused to give exact information, only stating that they had provided for the needs of 46 per cent of the prisoners. This figure was in any case inadequate. The French Government did their best to make good the shortage of which they were fully aware, but stocks were almost exhausted and the quantities purchased overseas were too small to balance the steadily diminishing production at home.

Thus, as early as 1942, a critical situation had arisen, as the clothing worn out by the prisoners during two years of captivity could not be replaced.

It will have been seen from the previous chapter that the British Red Cross had, in 1939, begun the distribution of collective or communal standard parcels. In 1940 and 1941, it decided that all British Commonwealth prisoners should receive one standard parcel a week, and that complete outfits of clothing should be sent regularly to the camps, according to recommendations made by the camp leaders. It also instituted a whole series of special standard parcels, such as "Invalid Comfort Parcels" and "Medical Parcels", of two different types, one for camps and one for hospitals, the needs and sick roll of which were known; parcels for Indian PW, for airmen and seamen; and parcels for civilian internees, the contents of which varied according to the sex and age of the recipients.

The system adopted by the American Red Cross differed only in detail from the British. The Argentine Red Cross preferred standard bulk consignments and shipped foodstuffs according to kind in cases of 35 kilos, and clothing packed according to garment. Smaller donors used methods identical or similar to those described. For instance, the Brazilian Red Cross, and welfare organizations in Africa, the Near and Middle East long continued to send consignments on French lines, whilst the British Dominions and Colonies used precisely the same methods as the British and American Red Cross¹.

Relief supplies were purchased with funds from public or private sources, or by financial arrangements between States, chief of which was the American "Lend-Lease". The ICRC

¹ For fuller details see pp. 211 et seq.

had in general no knowledge of the financial agreements made by national organizations. This simplified its duties as trustee, and created difficulties only when goods were lost or damaged, or when contradictory instructions were received from donors bearing on the blockade, on export permits, or on priority of transport.

2. Effects of Economic Warfare on Relief Consignments for Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

The term "economic warfare" describes all measures taken by a belligerent to prevent the enemy from acquiring supplies from abroad which may contribute directly or indirectly to its military resources. Accordingly, from 1939 onwards, Great Britain and France on the one hand and Germany on the other reduced and supervised the international movement of goods. Unless accompanied by a "navicert" or "landcert" issued by the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in London, acting for the Allied Governments, no goods could pass from Allied to enemy territory, or even into neutral countries, the imports of which were thus fixed by quota.

Relief supplies, whether sent from Allied or neutral territory, were of course subject to the same regulations; these need not, however, be described in detail here¹, since consignments for PW and civilian internees, with which this chapter alone deals, were always looked on with favour and even held to be necessary by the Allied Governments. It will therefore suffice to record the difficulties that arose between the blockade authorities and the ICRC, in applying a principle which in itself was not disputed: the Allies claimed that shipments should be limited to categories of prisoners and goods likely to give rise to least abuse, whilst the Committee refused to take these restrictions as final.

From the outset, the ICRC made application to the British authorities for "navicerts" and "landcerts" for supplies sent from Allied territory, especially from overseas, and for

¹ See pp. 366 et seq.

export permits off the quota for goods to be re-exported from Switzerland for PW. The Committee had no difficulty in obtaining permits for individual parcels addressed by name. In a letter dated August 29, 1940, the Ministry of Economic Warfare also authorized collective consignments of standard parcels or bulk supplies addressed to camp leaders of specific camps, on condition that the ICRC should supervise their distribution. The letter referred to camp visits by the delegates of the ICRC, without however at this stage making such visits an indispensable condition. In this way, the ICRC had little difficulty in forwarding the first gift supplies from the Brazilian Red Cross and the relief consignments from the British Commonwealth as a whole, directed during the winter of 1940-41 to British PW and civilian internees, of whom there were about 40,000 in Germany and some thousands in Italy. The ICRC also sent some smaller consignments from Switzerland itself.

At the same time, supplies had to be sent to about one million French PW in Germany. These goods were dispatched mainly from unoccupied France, through the care of the Vichy Government and Red Cross, and the French Red Cross Society and other benevolent organizations in North Africa. In view of the inadequacy of resources available in France, the Vichy Government tried to obtain extra supplies by purchases overseas and in Portugal.

The Ministry of Economic Warfare, however, were opposed to the unrestricted dispatch of such large quantities of goods to Germany, especially in view of the unstable political situation in France after the armistice. They also objected in principle to bulk shipments, the supervision of which they considered more difficult than that of standard parcels, and they authorized the distribution of goods from overseas only to camps visited by the Committee's delegates. They had, moreover, already shown an inclination to prohibit all consignments not exclusively intended for base camps. The ICRC was thus in each case obliged to re-open long and troublesome negotiations in order to secure "navicerts" or "landcerts" for specified purchases by the French Red Cross or by some French Government agency, and for goods which it bought itself with the funds

placed at its disposal. One instance of the results achieved was an increase in the monthly meat ration for French PW, which, thanks to the efforts of the Committee, was raised from 300 to 500 tons.

Whilst the ICRC was obliged to conform to these regulations, it always disputed the principle that the issue of "navicerts" should be dependent on camp visits as an indispensable condition, in the first place because it wished to help war victims in the camps and prisons which it had not yet been authorized to enter¹, and secondly, because it feared that its relief work as a whole would be compromised, should military operations bring about the temporary suspension of visits to PW camps.

Discussions on this point led to no positive result, but the ICRC was more successful concerning bulk consignments. It was able to prove to the blockade authorities, by several examples, that it was neither practical nor even possible to convey in parcel form the large quantities of goods intended for hundreds of thousands of French PW, and that, moreover, foodstuffs packed in cases of 30 to 60 kilos could be inspected just as efficiently as standard parcels. With certain provisos, the Ministry of Economic Warfare then authorized shipments in bulk and, in 1941 and 1942, granted "navicerts" and "land-certs" for which, however, the ICRC had to make application as and when they were required.

British PW and civilian internees in Germany received monthly from 20 to 30 kilos of foodstuffs per head, that is, three times the quantity allotted to a French prisoner, even taking into account the parcels sent to him direct by relatives, which averaged 7 to 10 kilos per man. The nutrition value of standard parcels for English-speaking PW was also higher than that of bulk consignments and family parcels sent to Allied PW of other nationalities.

Consignments intended for British PW had of course to pass through French territory; they were therefore dependent upon the goodwill of the Port Authority of Marseilles and the

¹ This applied to detainees in concentration camps and also to Soviet PW. See pp. 77 et seq.; pp. 55 et seq.

railway personnel, and upon the vigilance exercised by the police against thefts. The ICRC, voicing public opinion in France in this regard, used the above facts as arguments in negotiating with the blockade authorities in London and Lisbon, when the latter proposed to place still further restrictions on shipments from overseas for French prisoners.

From 1942 onwards, shipments of meat were supplemented by tinned fish and other foodstuffs purchased in Portugal and the Portuguese colonies in Africa.

The ICRC had also to procure the necessary permits for sending supplies to Belgian prisoners, whom the Belgian Congo was making increasing efforts to assist. Dutch, Greek, Norwegian, Polish and Yugoslav prisoners were assisted by their own Governments and Red Cross Societies set up in London ; these sent standard parcels under the terms of arrangements made direct with the British and United States authorities. These measures simplified the formalities, but the donors had some difficulty in finding goods in adequate quantities within the British Commonwealth and the American hemisphere.

During 1942, the United States also instituted a strict control over their exports ¹, and, generally speaking, economic warfare was intensified. The German authorities continued the regular recruiting of additional civilian workers in occupied countries, and ever greater numbers of PW were " converted " into civilian workers. The British and American blockade authorities, who were aware that a large proportion of the relief supplies entrusted to the ICRC passed on from PW base camps to labour detachments, feared that these groups might not be clearly distinguished from the groups of civilian workers ; they were also afraid that supervision by the camp leaders and the ICRC delegates might not be sufficiently strict, and finally, that the enemy might not rigidly conform to Art. 31 of the 1929 Convention, which stipulates that the work of PW shall in no way be directly connected with the war effort. To provide against

¹ The United States controlling authority was the Board of Economic Warfare. All formalities had, however, as hitherto, to go through the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London, which carried out the instructions of the Inter-Allied Blockade Commission.

these risks, they were prepared henceforth to allow relief only on a limited scale to base camps. The effect would have been disastrous, as at that time 90 per cent of Allied PW were in labour detachments. Moreover, the question of abolishing bulk consignments was again raised.

With regard to the first point, a representative of the ICRC was sent to London to discuss the position. He pointed out that the very great number of British and American PW scattered amongst the labour detachments would also suffer severely under the proposed restrictions. He made it clear to the blockade authorities that the distribution and supervision procedure provided all guarantees that could be desired, since PW who had been "converted" into civilian workers were struck off the lists by the camp leaders, so that no confusion was possible. As a result, "navicerts" were granted in August 1943 for 600 tons of tunny fish and 300 tons of jam, with the option of distributing these foodstuffs also among the labour detachments. This success was, unfortunately, but short-lived.

The ICRC also finally gained its point on the question of bulk shipments; the British and American authorities had to recognize that relief work could not admit of any discrimination in nationality, and that by impeding this mutual aid, they would inevitably harm their own men. Since British and American PW received relief supplies in bulk from Latin America and the Near East, other Allied PW ought to have the same facilities, especially as their supplies were not in any case equal in quantity to those of the PW from the British Commonwealth and the United States. Polish and Yugoslav prisoners, for instance, received aid only in proportion to the funds and foodstuffs available; the number of French prisoners was so great that available transport did not allow more than a monthly average of 10 kilos per man to be sent. For these reasons, the Ministry of Economic Warfare agreed, providing certain additional measures of supervision were taken, to allow "navicerts" for goods from North Africa in particular, which were urgently required for some 40,000 French Colonial prisoners held in "Front Stalags" in occupied France. The same applied to cocoa-beans and sugar sent in bulk from South America

to Switzerland, for export in the form of chocolate to countries holding prisoners.

In 1943, the blockade authorities decided to withdraw the right the ICRC had frequently used, to purchase goods on behalf of the donors or to make application for "navicerts" and "landcerts". This decision unfortunately caused great loss of time, for when donors failed in getting the authority required, their final resort was to request the ICRC to intervene in London or Washington. The Committee was thus apprised of some urgent matters that had been held up for three or four months, and still further time was required before any settlement could be reached.

The financial agreement for the release of frozen funds, which the provisional Free French Government in Algiers had made with the United States and the American Red Cross at the end of 1943, caused a further change in the conditions governing the feeding of French prisoners. Thenceforth, French PW who were in labour detachments had the right to receive American standard parcels in the same way as their comrades in the base camps, and like the Greeks, Poles, Jugoslavs and others, provided there was no infringement in this respect of Art. 31 of the Convention. At the same time, the ICRC had at last obtained authority to increase the number of its delegates in Germany, and since these men were able to visit not only base camps, but several of the labour detachments attached to them, effective supervision was ensured.

The regulations concerning PW also applied to civilian internees. Almost insuperable difficulties arose, however, in applying the measures of inspection required by the blockade authorities not only to internees in fenced camps, but also to those who were interned alone (*isolati*), or simply confined to their homes (*confinati*). This applied in particular to the Allied *isolati*, mainly British, who were to be found scattered all over Italy. These persons had been given the status of civilian internee by the Italians, who allowed them, although dispersed, to receive aid by the same procedure as that applying to PW. The British Red Cross were also anxious to help these people as it did the civilian internees of the big

camps in Germany and occupied France. The ICRC, however, when asked whether it could guarantee the meticulous supervision of distribution, had to reply that this was out of the question, if only because its delegates in Rome were too few in number, and because military operations made travel increasingly difficult. However, after discussions which lasted for several months, the British Red Cross persuaded the Ministry of Economic Warfare to make an exception to the blockade regulations, and regular consignments of provisions and clothing were thus sent to British and American *isolati* through the care of the Committee. In respect of the *isolati* of other nationalities, promising replies had been received, but before the ICRC could be duly authorized to distribute relief from overseas, the events of the summer of 1943 and the Italian armistice put a stop for the time being to all relief work in Italy.

The Germans had set up a counter-blockade in opposition to the Allied blockade, whereby all exports from Switzerland required a *Geleitschein* issued by the German Legation in Berne. This was, however, a mere formality, as it was to the interest both of the German Government and of the Military High Command to promote the despatch of relief consignments to PW and civilian internees. Supplies sent by the German Red Cross to German PW naturally obtained *Geleitscheine* without any difficulty.

The ICRC was authorized on several occasions to import raw materials into Switzerland, off the quota, for export after conversion by manufacture. This was so for the cocoa beans already mentioned, and for various shipments of textiles, from which underwear was made in Allied working centres.

Finally, it is only just to mention that, thanks to special facilities granted by the Allied blockade authorities, medicaments and medical stores were not subject to the regulations in force for foodstuffs and clothing.

3. Role of the ICRC as a trustee and neutral intermediary in the forwarding and distribution of funds and goods for relief.

The ICRC accepted all funds and supplies entrusted to it for transmission to third parties, and in so doing assumed by implication the role of a trustee. At the end of the war in Europe, the value of the goods it had handled amounted to some three thousand million Swiss francs. The above function was not, however, and could never be made subject to a contract in law. The Committee confined its action to informing those concerned of the regulations in force, both in the belligerent countries and in Switzerland. The donors who entrusted the funds or the goods to its care accepted, by so doing, the risks of the operation involved. They were free to provide against these risks, and especially against war risks, by insurance of all kinds. This precaution was only taken as a rule in respect of gifts from private sources, for when relief goods were supplied by Governments, compensation was only nominal, since it consisted merely of an adjustment of book entries as between two Ministries. Moreover, it was not within the power of the ICRC to avoid losses incidental to the war, or confiscations and misuses of all kinds. It did, however, require a protective guarantee that all goods forwarded through it would be accepted by the Detaining Powers. As shown in the preceding chapter, agreements in this respect had been concluded at the outbreak of hostilities, and others were made, as and when required by new relief schemes.

The Committee also had to take into account the laws and regulations in force in Switzerland. The Swiss authorities allowed the warehousing of goods, and thanks to their goodwill, any difficulties which arose were quickly resolved.

(a) *Rights of ownership; right to allocate and distribute supplies.* — The ICRC claimed proprietary rights only in regard to relief supplies purchased by it with funds given, but not earmarked for any purpose. These funds were too small to justify statistical records; they were chiefly derived from small gifts of two to five Swiss francs, or the equivalent in foreign

currency, received in letters, or with sums due for invoices, with remarks such as " For PW relief ", " For the children of Europe ", " For the victims of the war ", " For charity ", and so on. Only very rarely did the Committee itself make any decision on the allocation of these monies: in general, they served to make up the balance required to meet the cost of a purchase which slightly exceeded the amount available.

By far the greater part of the relief entrusted to the ICRC was intended for a certain nationality or category of war victims, sometimes even for one particular camp. In such cases, the donors retained full ownership rights in respect of these goods or funds, and the Committee had to follow their instructions. If these could not be carried out, it had to ask for others. Since this right held good from first to last, the function of trustee passed from the ICRC to one of its delegates in belligerent countries, or to a camp leader. In point of fact, only the final recipient (that is, the prisoner for whom the joint relief action was undertaken) could become owner of the gift. In consequence, the camp leader himself was bound strictly to observe the instructions given by the donors, which he usually received from the ICRC, or in exceptional cases, direct.

This procedure entailed no difficulties in the case of food-stuffs, which were in general for immediate consumption. Otherwise, however, collective reserves were accumulated, under the camp leaders, as all personal hoarding of provisions was prohibited by the Detaining Powers.

Medicaments were, of course, entrusted to the sole charge of the medical officers who alone were qualified to administer them, rather than to the camp leaders or the patients. In any case, controversy on this question was rare and unimportant.

On the other hand, ownership rights to clothing gave rise throughout the war to negotiations with the German authorities, with the legal representatives of the prisoners, and with the donors. Since these rights had no foundation in law, those concerned had usually to be satisfied with a compromise. The facts may be given in a few words.

All articles of clothing which could not be distributed immediately on arrival and all winter clothing recovered during

the warm weather were placed in camp stocks. By a wide interpretation of Art. 43 of the Geneva Convention, camp leaders should have had the sole right to dispose of these stocks, in accordance with the donors' instructions. Since the rights of trusteeship in this matter were, however, from the outset claimed by the German authorities, camp leaders retained mere supervisory rights, which depended for their effective use upon the perspicacity of the camp leader and the goodwill of the commandant. As a mutual guarantee, the storehouses were in principle provided with two separate locks. In addition, the marking of clothing either by the donors, or at least at their expense, or by the Detaining Power, prevented any later claims that stocks given by the ICRC had been supplied by the Detaining Power, or belonged to it as booty.

The continual transfers of prisoners caused further complications and very often made the supervision by camp leaders meaningless. Since only part of the men in a camp were moved elsewhere, part of the clothing stocks should have been moved with them. It was obviously easy for the Detaining Power to make these circumstances an excuse for controversy, and for pleading shortage of rolling stock, lack of warehousing space or the events of the war, to evade their obligations.

Various special measures were taken which also impaired ownership rights: for instance, the military authorities only issued new clothing to the men in exchange for used garments, without troubling to enquire if the used clothing had been drawn from their own stocks or from collective consignments sent by the ICRC. In order to provide against escapes, the men were not allowed to have two garments of the same kind (for instance, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of shoes, etc.). Here too, surplus garments were withdrawn from use, whatever their origin. Finally, the principle generally enforced in Germany, to distribute clothes where most urgently required, was not easily reconcilable with the instructions from donors, who wished their gifts to be reserved for men of their own nationality.

The ICRC approached the German Government on several occasions, either direct or through its delegation, in the hope

of adjusting these questions. At the beginning of 1944, in particular, they sent a Memorandum to the Government summarizing the whole subject, but this attempt, like others, led to no result.

No negotiations of this kind were necessary with the other side. The Italian Red Cross did not send clothing to Italian PW, while the issue of uniforms supplied by the German Red Cross to the German officers and men held throughout the British Commonwealth was satisfactory. These PW also had the benefit of supplies from the Detaining Power, who as a rule were both willing and able to observe the stipulations of Art. 12 of the Convention, although unfortunately this treatment was, as we have seen, not reciprocated.

The ICRC never refused its good offices when a dispute arose between the Detaining Power and camp leaders. The camp leaders did, however, sometimes have differences with the prisoners themselves, over proposed steps for reducing waste, the fixing of dates for the distribution of winter clothing or the recovery of reserve clothing that had already been issued, for redistribution to newcomers. In such cases, the Committee refrained from taking action, even when asked to do so by those concerned or by the Detaining Power : it simply passed on complaints to the donors, who took whatever steps they wished.

A most delicate question was that of communal camp furnishings. This covers all articles used in the equipment of a camp or hospital, such as bedding, crockery, kitchen utensils, and stoves ; lorries and petrol for taking supplies to labour detachments ; tools and gear used by gardeners, cobblers, tailors and barbers, as well as musical instruments, books, games, sports gear and so on. The camp leaders, as trustees, had the custody of all this material, which remained in theory the property of the donors. For several reasons, however, and especially because of frequent transfers of camps, no effective check was possible. When camp material had passed through several hands, neither the ICRC nor the camp leaders knew exactly where it was to be found, and they could then rely only upon the willingness and good faith of the German authorities.

Lastly, blankets were the cause of frequent controversy in camps in Germany. When received in family parcels or in individual consignments from Governments or Red Cross Societies, they were the men's own property. When sent in collective consignments, however, blankets remained in charge of the camp leaders as communal stores, and when supplied by the Detaining Power they were considered to be its property. In the absence of any general system of distinctive markings, it was almost inevitable that blankets from different sources should be confused ; prisoners were moreover unwilling to give up their own blankets when changing camp. From this sprang a host of claims which it would be tedious to describe in detail. It is enough to say that the ICRC did its best to settle these differences, and that some of the donors so far lost patience that they gave up sending blankets, even when asked to do so by the men themselves.

(b) *Receipt of Supplies.* — It should first be recalled that large quantities of supplies reached the prisoners direct through the post, without the ICRC acting as intermediary¹. As far as individual parcels were concerned, the exact number sent was never known to the Committee. It did, however, usually receive from the donors lists of the collective postal consignments for checking by their delegates on arrival. Shipments of this kind did not as a rule cause any difficulties.

Three different methods, according to the origin and destination of the goods, were used for taking delivery of supplies sent through the ICRC for PW and civilian internees.

(1) Overseas shipments arrived in *Lisbon*, the only neutral port through which goods coming from the Western hemisphere, Australia and Africa could enter Europe. Delivery was taken by the permanent delegation of the ICRC, which had been set up in this port in June 1940.

The goods were stocked, under the supervision of the delegation, in bonded warehouses and had the benefit of a special import duty which was only one per cent of the normal rate.

¹ See above pp. 10-11.

The shipments varied considerably in tonnage, sometimes amounting to as much as 3,000 tons.

A firm of specialists examined the condition of the goods on arrival, and its reports were forwarded to the Red Cross Societies concerned, with the exception of the British Red Cross, which checked its own shipments. Damaged parcels were repacked sufficiently to allow transport to Geneva. Damage which occurred after despatch from Lisbon was recorded either at Marseilles, Genoa, in Switzerland, or on arrival of the supplies at the camps. Thus, the donors often received several reports in succession concerning a particular consignment, especially in case of damage. All documents relating to the cargo passed through the delegation in Lisbon (postal way-bills showing the number of mail-bags, bills of lading and accompanying documents, and so on).

The shipments were forwarded through an official customs agent who handled the work with great care and at very moderate cost, throughout the war. Goods were re-shipped as and when space was available, on vessels sailing under the ICRC flag, and in the same ratio as the stocks held by the respective organizations using the shipping space. Handling costs at Lisbon and carriage to the port of destination were charged direct to the donors.

(2) At *Genoa* the ICRC had no permanent delegate ; when large deliveries were expected, a representative was sent for a few weeks only. Otherwise the Committee made use of the services of shipping agents who supervised the loading of goods into railway wagons for Switzerland, via Chiasso or Domodossola.

(3) At *Marseilles*, the chief port of arrival, a permanent ICRC delegation was set up during the winter of 1940-1941. Assisted by forwarding agents, it looked after the discharge of cargoes and the loading, on the same vessels, of relief supplies intended for German and Italian PW in countries overseas. The delegation staff superintended the warehousing of goods which were held up owing to the shortage of wagons. Lastly, they took the necessary steps, in agreement with Geneva, to obtain rolling stock, and supervised the loading of the wagons.

Once the shipments from overseas had been warehoused in Switzerland, the ICRC took final delivery of the goods.

Relief supplies from France itself, usually sent by the *Direction générale des prisonniers de guerre* at Lyons, were received in direct transit by the ICRC, in the form of shipments already grouped for despatch to specified camps. In such cases it sufficed to make a quick tally of the wagons, to check their contents, as far as possible without unloading, and to make out fresh way-bills. The goods then left for Germany in the same condition as that in which they had arrived in Switzerland.

Finally, relief supplies which the German and Italian Red Cross Societies sent overseas, and 70 to 80 per cent of which went by the ordinary postal service, were addressed to the ICRC delegations in the countries where the prisoners were held, — for instance to Montreal for Canada, and to Simla and New Delhi for India. Nearly all were addressed to the camp leaders as the ultimate consignees.

The delegate generally placed the entry formalities for the goods in the hands of a forwarding agent, after which he passed the goods through the customs, obtained free carriage to the camps, and in certain cases, when a transfer of prisoners had taken place meanwhile, altered their addresses.

(c) *Warehousing in Switzerland*. — After the Franco-German armistice, which abolished any Western Front in Europe between 1940 and 1944, relief supplies intended for French PW were almost all kept in stock in the unoccupied zone of France, until November 1942. At the same time, it became imperative to build up stocks in Switzerland, on behalf first of the British Red Cross, then of the Allied Red Cross Societies which had been re-formed in London, and finally, of the American Red Cross, when the United States came into the war. This was, in fact, the only means of ensuring an uninterrupted flow of supplies for the prisoners, in view of the fact that shipments arrived at irregular intervals.

At first, the ICRC rented premises for this purpose, but it was later obliged to have warehouses built, which were

managed by its own staff¹. The conditions of warehousing in Switzerland were known to the donors and the Detaining Powers; the goods were not insured unless the senders had taken out a policy before despatch.

Most of the National Red Cross Societies had representatives in Switzerland; these made regular visits to the warehouses and settled all technical matters with the ICRC. The goods remained on an average for three months in Switzerland; it sometimes occurred, however, that they were held up for a far longer period, in which case the Committee had to take all necessary precautions to prevent the deterioration of food-stuffs and perishable medicaments, and to provide against destruction by insects and rodents.

(d) *Warehousing in belligerent countries.* — The delegations of the ICRC, too, had to have stocks, which were more or less considerable. The delegations overseas, who looked after German and Italian PW and civilian internees, usually kept only sufficient stocks to meet emergencies, as the German and Italian Red Cross Societies generally supplied them with funds rather than goods. This allowed purchases to be made locally in order to meet the demands of PW or their camp leaders, as and when they were made.

Conditions were not the same in Europe, however. Here the setting up of large depots proved a matter of necessity in occupied territories, especially in France, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece.

The ICRC delegation in *Berlin* did not build up stocks during the first part of the War, except small quantities of medicaments brought by the medical officers visiting the camps, and a few parcels which had to be issued in Berlin itself. The delegates were, however, in almost daily contact with the ICRC in Geneva, to whom they communicated all the information they were instructed to gather concerning (1) camp strengths, (2) the transfers of PW, (3) the despatch of

¹ The question of warehousing is explained in detail on pp. 227-250.

supplies to the camps, and (4) the stocks and requirements of each camp. The importance and usefulness of this liason work increased in proportion to the scale of relief work in Germany, and as and when the German authorities allowed the delegation to expand the number of its staff, especially that of the visiting delegates. Towards the end of the War, other warehouses were set up in Germany, for instance at Lübeck, Ravensburg and Landeck ¹.

In principle, the delegation in *Rome* should have been able to work according to the same methods, but the conditions in Italy did not allow them to be strictly applied. The Italian administration was far less systematically organized than in Germany; a further difficulty was the widespread dispersal of PW, and especially of civilian internees, such as the *isolati* and the *confinati*.

4. Arrival of relief supplies in camp : unloading, storing and distribution

The numerical strength of a main camp included not only its actual occupants, but also the men in the annexes, the labour detachments, and the hospitals and sick-wards attached to the main camp. The allocation of supplies by Geneva was, as a rule, based on the total strength.

There were, however, many exceptions to this rule. In the first place, certain hospitals in Italy and Germany did not form part of a camp, administratively speaking. This was the case in particular with special centres, such as Mühlberg, for seriously disabled men, and Tangerhütte, for tubercular cases, where patients were assembled pending their repatriation by hospital train, or because their proper treatment was more easy to administer.

Particular difficulties arose in providing for PW enrolled by the Germans in *Bau- und Arbeitsbataillone* or BAB ². These

¹ See pp. 90-94.

² Building and Labour Battalions.

were flying squads of skilled workmen, usually roofers and glaziers, and mostly composed of French prisoners. Some of these BAB were constantly being shifted, and were thus attached to several camps in succession, a fact which had to be taken into account in allocating supplies. Other BAB were not attached to any camp, or could not be supplied from the main camp because of distance, or lack of transport : in such cases supplies had either to be sent direct, or by way of the nearest camp, even if the BAB concerned did not form part of its administration. As a rule, the ICRC was kept informed of these details by the camp leaders, but was sometimes at a loss, through lack of precise data on the nearest railway station, means of discharging and storing supplies, and so on.

As far as possible, supplies were sent to main camps and their annexes by full wagon-loads ¹. It was the duty of the camp leaders to receive and check the goods, to send receipts for them to Geneva and to distribute them. This last was no small task, since some camps had as many as 1,400 labour detachments. Moreover, the camp leaders had frequent difficulties in the matter of transport ; when appealed to for help, the ICRC made application to the camp commandants, either in writing or through their visiting delegates. The French Government also sent lorries to Germany for use by the principal camp leaders. The other Allied donors held the view that it fell to the Detaining Power alone to supply the vehicles required, and prompted the ICRC to intervene to this end.

Some camps in Italy, for instance those in the Apennines, lay in regions which had no regular transport service of any kind. Here the camp leaders were obliged to employ private lorries, carts and even mules. Transport by such chance means was not only uncertain, but, contrary to the usual practice, was not free.

As a rule, donors stipulated that the relief which they supplied should be distributed to PW of their own nationality ²,

¹ On this subject, see pp. 170 et seq.

² For distribution by nationality, see pp. 251-257.

but their instructions were frequently overruled by the PW themselves, in favour of men from other countries with whom they were detained. French PW, in particular, formed a large majority in most camps in Germany and had the advantage of receiving regular, if not abundant supplies, at least until the spring of 1944, and these men usually shared with their comrades who had no parcels, either because the Detaining Power prevented their receiving any, or because there was no donor to attend to their needs.

This practice of sharing was made known from time to time in letters and reports from camp leaders to the ICRC. So long as it was done on a small scale, the donors were not over-concerned. For instance, at the time when the camps held only a few Americans amongst great numbers of British PW, these men were able to share in the consignments from the British Red Cross without any objection being raised by that Society.

The question only became acute when the proportion of such indirect recipients became very large, as it did in the case of Russian PW, and towards the end of the War, in the case of interned Italian military personnel, of whom there were thousands in nearly all the camps. Out of charity for these unfortunate men, several camp leaders decided, with the consent of their comrades, to share part of their own supplies with them. This practice applied as a rule only to food and cigarettes. Clothing was very rarely shared, either because it was barely sufficient for the recipients themselves, or because the donors' instructions were especially strict concerning this form of relief.

The sharing of medical supplies was nearly always allowed. Although frequent complaints were in fact made, the PW medical officers who were responsible for hospital treatment were generally able to impose the principle of unconditional medical aid, and to distribute to all their patients the medicaments and restoratives at their disposal.

5. Supervision of distribution

The ICRC, as early as 1939, made provision for obtaining proof of arrival of relief consignments. It held that such confirmation was due to the donors and moreover, that it encouraged them to pursue their efforts. At first, three receipt forms were sent with each consignment, one of which was kept by the camp commandant, one by the camp leader, whilst the third was returned to Geneva, bearing the signature of the camp leader (compulsory) and that of the camp commandant (optional).

Whilst adjusting the machinery for relief during the winter of 1941-42, the ICRC, after various trials, adopted the system of a receipt form in triplicate¹. One part of this was kept by the camp leader and the others were sent back duly signed to Geneva. The ICRC was thus able to hand one receipt to the donors with the monthly statements. The receipts showed the number of articles or parcels, their total weight, and any shortages noted by the camp leader in the goods on arrival. Receipts also bore a number and various references to enable statistics to be made by the Hollerith machines system. As the numbers of the receipts appeared on the monthly statements of shipments, the donors had no difficulty in checking periodically the receipts received and those which were still outstanding.

Generally, it took from fifteen to sixty days for receipts to be returned to Geneva. If, at the end of two months' time, the ICRC had received neither the receipt, nor a letter or report from the camp leader in lieu thereof (should it have gone astray with the other documents accompanying the consignment: way-bill, customs permit etc.), a copy and a claim were sent to the camp leader. If this copy was not returned, consignments of slight value were considered as lost. For more valuable shipments, the ICRC asked the camp commandant for an explanation, sent a copy of its letter to the delegate and requested the railway authorities to open an enquiry. These steps usually made it possible to reconstruct events. For

¹ See facsimile in the volume of Annexes.

instance, it was sometimes found that (1) a consignment had been diverted in transit from its original destination, owing to a transfer of prisoners, and could not be identified by the camp leader as the way-bills had been lost, or (2) that the consignment had been destroyed by bombing or other military operations, or finally, (3) that it had been totally or partly pilfered. It should be recorded, however, that losses due to theft were few, and only amounted to one or two per cent of the goods forwarded ¹.

¹ On this question of great importance to the donors, see pp. 177 et seq.

Chapter 3

Campaigns in the Balkans

Relief schemes in the Balkans were set on foot immediately after the campaigns of the summer of 1941. They were, for several reasons, exceptionally difficult.

In the first place, the main railway lines, and especially the most important, that of the Orient Express, had been cut in the Balkan countries owing to military operations. There were thus wide tracts of territory to which relief supplies could not be sent, since the only route possible from Switzerland was by the Arlberg, or Trieste.

Equally serious obstacles were offered by the confused situation created by the German occupation, or by the installation of satellite governments. Communications were frequently cut by the resistance movements. Thanks to the goodwill generally shown in these countries to the Red Cross, shipments which did not reach their destination were almost always sent back to the ICRC representative in one of the intermediate countries. For example, the delegation in Yugoslavia had to accept and distribute relief supplies which normally should have gone to PW in Greece; the delegation in Rumania did the same with goods bound for, or coming from the Near East, and which could not be sent in transit through Turkey, as had been planned.

The conditions of internment for PW and civilians in the Balkans were in many respects unlike those elsewhere. Thus, although the German authorities in Belgrade had stated that

there would only be transit camps in Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia, thousands of Allied PW were detained in these countries over a very long period. The status of the various categories of detainees could not have been less clearly defined or more subject to variation. They comprised Allied service men and civilians, partisans, people arrested for political reasons by the Germans, the Italians or by Governments acting under the orders of the occupying Power, and so on.

In order to adapt itself to these circumstances, the ICRC had to organize its work in the Balkans on far more flexible lines than in Central and Western Europe.

Before speaking of the Balkan countries proper, reference should be made to *Hungary*. When, in 1941, that country entered the war against Yugoslavia, and in consequence against Great Britain also, the British Embassy in Budapest had to abandon the relief schemes it had been carrying out during the preceding winter. On the other hand, the Embassy maintained by the Vichy Government until 1944 gave aid to French PW who had escaped from Germany and who arrived in Hungary by way of Austria or Czechoslovakia. It also looked after French citizens who were isolated or in small groups in the various Balkan countries. The Hungarian Red Cross gave help direct to Hungarians who had remained in Yugoslavia after the declaration of war, whilst Yugoslavs in Hungary received family parcels from their own country. Since there was sufficient food available in both these producing countries, it was unnecessary for the ICRC to take any action in behalf of this group of internees. Until 1944, that is, before Hungary put herself entirely under German domination, the ICRC was not called upon to look after Allied nationals in that country. Thenceforth, the Committee did its best to give those in Hungary the same help as it gave to those in other occupied territories.

In *Rumania* and *Bulgaria* there was little relief work to be done in behalf of Allied PW. At the end of the war there were only 803 American, 28 British and five Yugoslav PW in Rumania, and a small group of American airmen in Bulgaria. The ICRC delegations in Bucharest and Sofia, whose main task was to provide relief for the civil population and for political deportees

and detainees, were also able to assist these PW, in co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies, by means of stocks which were periodically replenished from Geneva.

From 1941 onwards, there were large numbers of Soviet PW in Rumania but they are not dealt with here; the question of relief to PW of this nationality will be reviewed as whole below ¹.

Matters were very different in Greece, Albania and Jugoslavia.

When *Greece* was entirely occupied, the German forces captured a large number of British troops whom they intended to evacuate without delay. The ICRC immediately provided their delegations in Athens, Salonika and Belgrade with stores to enable them to supply provisions for the journey, clothing and toilet articles for the thousands of men who were due for transfer to Germany, either by trainloads or in single wagons. A number of them, who were more or less seriously wounded, remained behind in Greek, or even in Yugoslav hospitals. Moreover, a great many of the British troops who had joined the Greek partisans were taken prisoner, either singly or in small groups, for months and even years to come. These men were also removed to the north, in so far as their condition allowed or means of transport were available. Greek PW were transferred either to Italy or Germany, according to whichever Power had captured them.

Germany entrusted Italy with the administration of the greater part of Greece and only resumed it herself after the armistice of 1943. Until that date, it was therefore at the instance of the Italian authorities, or of the Greek authorities under Italian orders, that Greek partisans and civilians considered as politically suspect were arrested and confined, either in concentration camps or in prisons.

This subject will be more fully dealt with in the chapter on political detainees and deportees ². It is, however, touched

¹ See pp. 53-60 and Vol. I, pp. 404-436.

² See pp. 73 et seq.

on here, in reference to relief to PW, because the distinction between the various types of detainees, such as Allied PW, partisans and civilians, was less clearly defined in Greece than, for example, in Germany. Consequently, it was possible on the one hand to supply Greek concentration camps with food-stuffs more rapidly than elsewhere, and on the other, some of the Greeks confined in prisons benefited by relief to which they normally would not have been entitled, because they were together with Allied, in particular British PW.

While assistance to the Greek population formed by far their most important work, the ICRC delegations in Athens and Salonika also looked after British PW and small groups of French, Yugoslav, Polish and other civilian internees. The work of these delegations was chiefly hampered by shortage of transport.

When the German Authorities took the place of the Italians in 1943, they assembled in Southern Greece labour detachments of Yugoslav prisoners (probably sent from Germany) who, like their fellow-countrymen working in the extreme North of Norway, had preserved their status of PW. The ICRC encountered great difficulties in bringing up food supplies for these groups, who were hundreds of miles distant from their base camps.

In *Jugoslavia*, as in Greece, the partisans took up arms against the Axis troops and the forces which supported them. The ICRC delegation in Belgrade, like those in Athens and Salonika, were provided with 50 or 60 tons of relief stocks, and could thus deal with the situation during the frequent breakdown of railway transport. The delegation had to look after Greek and British PW transferred from Greece to Germany through Jugoslavia, and in particular to care for the sick and wounded sent to hospital in that country. Among these there were small groups of American airmen, towards the end of the war.

The delegations in Belgrade and Zagreb also provided relief for Yugoslav nationals. After the campaigns of 1941, the German authorities made known that they would keep only the Serbs in captivity, whilst Croats, Slovenes, Istrians

and others would be released. However, the ICRC soon established the fact that all camps contained an indiscriminate mixture of Serb (or alleged Serb), Croat, Slovene, Montenegrin, Dalmatian and other PW. These differences were not taken into account when appealing for relief supplies. Fortunately, the gifts received from London, Washington, Buenos Aires and Cairo were intended for Yugoslav PW in general. A large number of these men were "converted" into civilian workers and kept back in Germany, where they shared the same conditions as French, Polish and other foreign workers. The ICRC was thus unable to do anything for them with regard to relief supplies.

Some Yugoslav civilians arrested after the occupation were taken to the big concentration camps and treated like the other political detainees. Others, however, were able to receive individual relief parcels, in so far as they were in localities to which the delegations had access. Occasionally, the delegations were able to carry out the distribution of supplies on the spot. They also made every endeavour to promote the despatch of family parcels to Hungary, Italy and Germany. Lastly, the delegation in Belgrade was extremely active in behalf of Yugoslav PW repatriated from Germany in such a bad condition that they had to be taken to hospitals in Belgrade and the neighbourhood. As these unfortunate men were still in units and wearing uniform, it was possible to give them the clothing and medicaments they so urgently needed.

Chapter 4

Mass Capture of Prisoners of War on the Eastern Front in Europe

The ICRC is able to alleviate the sufferings caused by war only insofar as the adversaries, in despite of events, retain some sense of common humanity. The Committee depends on the Governments for the success of its efforts, for without their goodwill it cannot despatch relief shipments wherever they are needed, nor can it, through the intermediary of its delegates authorized to visit the camps, check their arrival and distribution.

During the first phase of the war, relief work for PW was recognized, approved and assisted by all belligerents; thus this work rapidly developed far beyond the scope required by treaty stipulations, and even by the traditional principles of humanity. Unfortunately, that was not the case in Eastern Europe, after the USSR had been attacked by Germany on June 22, 1941. Despite all its efforts, the ICRC was unable to help any of the German, Finnish, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak and Rumanian PW in Russia, or any of the Soviet PW detained by Germany and her Allies, with the sole exception of those who had fallen into Finnish hands. A few minor and isolated distributions of relief supplies did take place, but on the whole, the hundreds of thousands of men captured on the Eastern Front received no collective relief shipments of any kind. Such aid would only have been possible on a reciprocal basis and this was precluded by the mutual mistrust of the adversaries¹.

¹ For the problem as a whole and for relations between the ICRC and Soviet Russia, see Vol. I, pp. 404-436.

(a) *Russian Prisoners of War in Germany.*

On account of the swift advance of the German troops there were at first very many more Russian PW than German. In October they numbered already over 250,000, according to information furnished by the German military authorities, and as this number steadily increased, the problem of feeding such masses of men became acute. Reports received on the complete destitution of the Russian PW justified the fear that the coming winter would prove fatal to many of them.

On August 30 the German High Command informed the ICRC that not only would it allow, but in point of fact that it awaited the despatch of collective relief for Russian PW in German camps, and that such supplies would be entrusted to the camp commandants for distribution. The ICRC immediately made every endeavour to follow up this proposal. Encouraged by the favourable reception given by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Moscow to its offer of relief for the wounded and sick in Russia ¹, the ICRC sent word to the Soviet authorities by telegram on October 1, that it was ready to forward to Soviet PW in Germany supplies of underwear, footwear and tobacco, to supplement the rations provided by the Detaining Power.

At the same time, the Committee sought to procure goods outside Europe, and in particular in Africa. The British blockade authorities, to whom application had to be made in this matter, replied that the Committee was free to transport relief for the above purpose on the vessels it had itself chartered, provided it accepted responsibility for the proper distribution of the supplies. When communicating the successful result of its negotiations to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the ICRC added, in their telegram of February 16, 1942, that it had the necessary means of transport, and that funds to cover the costs could be transmitted to it by the Bank for International Settlements in Basle.

¹ See p. 61.

The Soviet Government did not, however, display any eagerness to have relief sent to its nationals in enemy hands ; at a time when its armies had, above all, to defend Moscow and Leningrad, it probably found it lacked the resources needed for such a purpose. The ICRC then approached the Allied countries and was able, by the end of February, to telegraph to Moscow that the Canadian Red Cross had offered 500,000 capsules of vitamins. The Committee made it clear, however, that the British authorities had strictly stipulated that the issue of these supplies should be supervised by delegates of the ICRC. It was further added that the German authorities would not allow this supervision to take place, unless the Soviet Government granted them reciprocity by accepting a delegate of the ICRC in Russia.

No reply to this telegram was received ; it was therefore impossible to go to the help of the Soviet PW, except in Finland where, as will be explained below, delegates of the ICRC had access to the camps. The obstacles created by the uncompromising attitude of both sides were all the more regrettable, since the material means were not wanting. In April 1942, the ICRC could have secured for Soviet PW in Germany 5,000 standard food parcels provided by the American Red Cross, whilst an enquiry had been received from Great Britain asking if the Committee was in a position to forward weekly parcels from the " Allied Packing Centre ". Had the first distribution met with success, further gifts would doubtless have flowed in.

In May 1942, the ICRC again approached the German military authorities, who seemed at first willing to accept collective relief, provided it was distributed by camp commanders, without any intervention whatsoever by the Committee's delegates. As this proviso could not be accepted by the blockade authorities and the donors, the gifts of the American Red Cross were sent on to Finland, as recorded later in this Report. The ICRC had expected, in point of fact, that the official reply, rather slow in coming, would be negative. Unfortunately, its fears were justified. On September 2, 1942, Germany, anxious concerning her men in Russian hands, about whom there was no information, stated that " she declined to make further concessions in behalf of an enemy who gave such clear proof of

his ill-will and that, consequently, all consignments of relief for Soviet PW would without exception be refused ”.

Circumstances were therefore to blame for the failure of the Committee's efforts. Matters remained as they were until the last weeks of the war in Europe, when the Committee introduced on its own responsibility a new method of distribution called the “pooling system”. At this time, the general chaos in Germany made it impossible to allocate food supplies to PW according to nationality or unit, in obedience to the donors' instructions. The urgent need of the moment was to save human lives by issuing relief on all hands, in general assembly camps, on the roads thronged with the thousands of men who were being withdrawn towards the West. Russian PW then benefited in good measure by the help that the ICRC brought up by rail and by road for all PW in Germany, without distinction.¹ Further, in May 1945, vaccine against exanthematic typhus was supplied to the Markt-Pongau Camp, where an epidemic had broken out among Soviet PW who had been released, but not yet repatriated.

At an earlier date, Russian PW in German hands had received, in two exceptional instances, small shipments which should be mentioned. The first consisted of medicinal herbs, an allocation from a collection of several hundred kilos made in Switzerland by the Swiss Women's Auxiliary Service and set aside for Soviet PW in proportion to their numbers. It went through in April 1944, the German military authorities having agreed that they would accept it, despite their standing rule, if the camp commandants were notified in advance and agreed to undertake the distribution.

During the summer of 1944, the Swiss Relief Committee for Russian Refugees handed the ICRC the following foodstuffs for Soviet PW :

200 boxes of ovaltine	(90 kilos)
1,400 soup cubes	(40 kilos)
109 bottles of tonic	(7.5 kilos)

Once again, the German Army High Command approved this consignment, on condition that it should not be repeated,

¹ See p. 87.

and agreed to the proposal of the ICRC to allocate it to PW in the Freising Military Hospital, attached to Stalag VII A. This parcel actually reached the addressees, as proved by a receipt signed by their spokesman. Through their delegates' reports, the ICRC also learnt that in military hospitals Soviet PW mingled with PW of all nationalities, and thus frequently shared in their medical relief parcels.

This account would be incomplete without reference to the help given to Russian PW who had escaped from Germany and sought refuge in neutral countries, particularly in Switzerland, where the first Russians arrived in March 1943. As they were unable to return home, or join the Allied forces before the close of 1944, the Swiss authorities lodged them in camps. An ICRC delegate visited these camps regularly and was thus able to issue, up to December 31, 1944, some 6,000 kilos of clothing, underwear and boots, as well as 1,400 kilos of soap and toilet articles to Soviet escaped PW and refugees. These relief supplies were given by the American and British Red Cross Societies, and by various Swiss welfare organizations.

When Germany collapsed, released Soviet PW again poured into Switzerland. In May 1945, there were 7,000 accommodated in 89 camps. Thanks to the American Red Cross, the ICRC had a large supply of garments, invalid foods, and cigarettes for these men.¹

(b) *Russian PW in Rumania and Finland.*

The only countries other than Germany which held Soviet PW were Rumania and Finland. Men taken by the Hungarian, Slovak and Italian forces were handed over to the German military authorities and taken to Germany.

In November 1941, there were some 60,000 Soviet PW in Rumania and on the left bank of the Dniester, and roughly 47,000 in Finland, in March 1942. The Rumanian and Finnish Red Cross Societies who transmitted this information to the ICRC, asked for its help; the blockade made it extremely difficult for these Societies to find sufficient relief locally for

¹ For further details see pp. 355 et seq.

men suffering from great exhaustion and in extreme need of clothing.

In Rumania, as in Germany, and for the same reasons, the ICRC unfortunately was not in a position to take action. The Committee's delegate was however authorized, in June 1943, to visit the Mais Camp, where Soviet officers were interned. A small quantity of pharmaceutical products was sent there at the request of the camp doctor. Meanwhile, however, the camp had been disbanded, and the parcel was therefore handed to Calafat Camp, which held 2,680 Russian PW.

In Finland, on the contrary, relief work was possible on a fairly large scale. This was the only country at war with Russia which, even in the absence of reciprocity, allowed the Committee's delegates to visit the camps and to supervise the issue of parcels. Since the blockade authorities' requirements had been met on this point, supplies from overseas and elsewhere could reach Finland.

According to the Finnish Red Cross, members of the Russian forces taken prisoner during the winter of 1941-1942 were already suffering, at the time of capture, from undernourishment and vitamin deficiency, and many died of exhaustion or disease. Finland herself, at war a second time since 1939, was at that time in great difficulties over her own food supply. Marshal Mannerheim, the President of the Finnish Red Cross, informed the ICRC on March 1, 1942, that food and medical stores were urgently required. He added that the Soviet PW in Finland had been granted the benefits of the 1929 Convention, though neither Finland, nor indeed the Soviet Union, were signatories, and that a delegate of the ICRC would be gladly accepted by the Finnish authorities and granted all facilities for carrying out his duties.

The ICRC at once put the matter to the Red Cross Societies of the Allies and was fortunate enough to find donors. In the first place, the American Red Cross handed over relief supplies which had originally been intended for Russian PW in Germany, but which these had not been able to receive, as related above, because the requisite supervision by the ICRC delegates was not accepted by the Detaining Power. These supplies consisted

of 5,000 standard food parcels each weighing 5 kilos and containing tinned meat and fish, butter, biscuits and chocolate, having a total nutritive value of 12,200 calories, as well as cigarettes and tobacco.

The parcels left Switzerland in sealed wagons in May 1942, and went by way of Frankfort-on-Main, Berlin and Stockholm, reaching Helsinki in June, where the Finnish Red Cross took delivery. In co-operation with the Society, a delegate of the ICRC on a temporary mission to Finland issued these parcels in July to 10,000 prisoners, selected from amongst the most needy, the seriously wounded and the sick, in thirteen camps. The recipients, most of whom were of peasant origin, welcomed these products of America with joy and gratitude. In the words of their camp leader, this event was a "red letter day" for them, and the gifts "an unexpected message from God". Once the parcels were distributed, the delegate sent to Geneva the completed receipts and the letters of thanks to which, as is well known, donors attach great importance.

Again, thanks to the American Red Cross, a second shipment of 3,653 standard food parcels was sent in December. The ICRC added fifty parcels containing the 500,000 capsules of vitamins (vitamins A, B, Br, C and nicotinic acids) provided by the Canadian Red Cross, and which it was impossible to send to Russian PW in Germany. The ICRC took this opportunity of forwarding eighty parcels containing copies of the New Testament to Finland, a gift from the World Council of Churches (Commission for Spiritual Aid to PW) in Geneva. The delegate had informed Geneva that, on the occasion of the first distribution of gifts, the Soviet prisoners had asked for Orthodox prayer books and Bibles in Russian for religious services in camps. All this relief was distributed under the supervision of an ICRC delegate, who stayed in Finland from December 23, 1942 to January 27, 1943.

In July 1943, the Soviet PW received, for the third time, 2,770 standard food parcels from the American Red Cross, and a gift from the Swiss Red Cross comprising 306 boxes of pease-meal and eleven cases of medicaments weighing respectively thirty tons and 580 kilos. In agreement with the

Finnish Red Cross, the delegate distributed the supplies mainly to hospital patients, convalescent tubercular cases and the seriously wounded. The pease-meal was stocked in camps and military hospitals for use in winter in the form of soup, to supplement the usual rations. Medicaments (Becozym, Cibazol, Irgamid, Redoxon, etc.) were shared amongst four military hospitals.

In September a fourth consignment was sent, consisting of 10,703 standard food parcels from the American Red Cross, and ten tons of milk powder from the Swiss Red Cross. The Committee's delegate handed the major part of this milk to hospitals, where it was given, on the senior medical officer's directions, to PW who needed extra food, in particular to sufferers from tuberculosis and pleurisy.

A fifth distribution took place in April 1944. This was carried out by delegates of the ICRC and of the Finnish Red Cross, and consisted of the following goods, sent from Sweden to the Finnish port of Abö: 4,852 standard food parcels, the gift of the American Red Cross (to which the Tolstoy Foundation in New York had largely contributed); 2,000 kilos of meat, vegetables, sugar, and soap, which the Argentine Red Cross had sent on behalf of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Buenos Aires; and 317 tons of pickled cabbage (Sauerkraut) from the Swedish Red Cross. Like the previous relief supplies, these too touched the Russian PW deeply, as they brought moral consolation as well as material aid. "This gift has convinced us", wrote one of these men, "that we had not been wholly forgotten, that we were not altogether friendless and forsaken".

In October 1944, the Soviet PW received 2,332 standard food parcels from the American Red Cross. This was the sixth and last consignment.

The ICRC delegates who spent intermittent periods in Finland from 1942 to 1944 were thus able to distribute quantities of foodstuffs, as well as medicaments and religious works. This relief, which weighed in all some 500 tons, was provided by the American, Argentine, Canadian, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies, and by the "Œuvre Suisse d'Entr'aide Ouvrière" (Swiss Worker's Mutual Welfare Scheme).

(c) *German, Finnish, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak and Rumanian PW in Russia.*

The Soviets captured a very large number of enemy combatants, particularly towards the end of the war, when the Russian armies had encircled whole divisions at Stalingrad, and the Germans were retreating from Leningrad, Moscow, the Caucasus and the Ukraine.

The great majority of these PW were German, but they also included members of the Rumanian, Hungarian, Slovak and Italian forces fighting on the Eastern Front. There were, too, nationals of countries annexed by Germany, in particular Alsatians and Luxemburgers, conscripted for the German army; further there were Spaniards and Frenchmen who had volunteered for the expeditionary forces, and Finns captured in the northern sector of the Eastern Front.

In the autumn of 1941 the ICRC made a first attempt to organize collective relief for these men, after having made a successful intervention in behalf of wounded and sick in Russia. In reply to the Committee's offer of August 12, the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had stated, on September 20, its willingness to accept medicaments, surgical instruments, dressings and other hospital stores, and that donors should send these consignments by arrangement with the commercial representatives of the USSR in their own countries. The ICRC informed the Alliance by telegram on October 1, that it had communicated its request to the Red Cross Societies concerned¹, and took the opportunity of expressing the hope that, in conformity with Art. 15 of the Fourth Hague Convention², it would be able to transmit parcels

¹ The ICRC learned later that several National Red Cross Societies had indeed sent large quantities of relief to Russia. The Australian Red Cross, in particular, sent two shipments, one of 1,166 comfort cases, to the value of £19,131 and one of a case of woollen clothing and of 30,000 sheep skins, to the value of £10,019. At the beginning of 1942 the American Red Cross gave medicaments, surgical instruments and clothing to the total value of 3,500,000 dollars. Russia received from the British Red Cross, in 15 different consignments, 1,410 tons of medical supplies, including one mobile X-ray apparatus.

² See Vol. I, p. 423.

through the Alliance, both to Russian PW in Germany and to German PW in Russia. The Committee also asked the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to approve two delegates who, in co-operation with the Alliance, would have settled all outstanding questions. In March 1942, the ICRC again approached the Commissariat and sought permission to send parcels to German PW, since it had a small quantity of relief supplies for them, consisting of two cases of sweets and tobacco which the German Red Cross had handed over to serve as a trial consignment.

Unfortunately, the Soviet authorities made no response to these proposals, and the ICRC never succeeded, despite repeated efforts, in accrediting a delegate to them, nor in sending anything whatsoever to Russia. Further, the complete absence of information on German and other servicemen captured by the Soviet army prevented these PW from receiving even the family parcels provided for in the 1907 Hague Convention, to which Russia as well as the States at war with her were signatory. Similarly, these States, with the exception of Finland, did not reveal the places of detention of Russian PW.

Besides these direct approaches, the ICRC made others, through its delegates, to the Soviet representatives in Turkey, Iran and Great Britain. As the German, Finnish, Hungarian, Italian and Rumanian Red Cross Societies had asked the ICRC on various occasions to forward relief supplies and had even, in 1943 and 1944, handed over funds for the purchase of food-stuffs and medicaments, the Committee's delegate, who had been sent on a special mission to Iran, was instructed to consult with the representative of the Alliance on how these requests might be carried out. The delegate in Teheran could have procured flour and rice on the spot. All these plans, however, came to nothing ¹.

¹ For the negotiations with Russia see Vol. I, pp. 404-436.

Chapter 5

The War in North Africa

After the conclusion of the armistice between the Vichy Government and the Axis Powers, the Allied Consulates in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia were still able, in spite of the increasingly uncertain political status of these three countries, to give direct assistance to their nationals who were in assigned places of residence, or were interned or lodged in camps and prisons. The total number of these persons in 1942 was estimated at roughly 10,000¹. Relief supplies were distributed for the most part by the American Consulates in Casablanca, Algiers and Tunis, to U.S. nationals, as well as to many British, Poles and others. As these direct distributions by the Consulates encountered ever greater difficulties, they were supplemented, from 1942 onwards, by those of the ICRC, whose delegates had permission to visit the camps and several other places of detention.

A few months before the Allied landing in North Africa the situation deteriorated greatly, and the Allied consular staff was itself interned. Permission to visit these officials, who were now themselves civilian internees, was granted by an Italo-German Armistice Commission. During this period, the ICRC delegates in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia distributed in all 14,000 standard food and medical parcels and 46 tons of miscellaneous relief supplies to all the Allied nationals whose places of internment could be reached. Most of these internees were British seamen of the Merchant Service or sailors of the R.N.

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission, Geneva, 1948.

The Allied landing in November 1942 in no way hindered the delegates, who remained on the spot and continued their work. A fortnight after applying to the Italo-German Armistice Commission for permission to issue parcels to interned Allied consular personnel, the delegate in Morocco visited the members of the said Commission, now interned in their turn and grateful enough to receive a first gift of food and tobacco from the ICRC, with the consent of the American and British authorities.

The operations after the landing quickly gave rise to a great influx of German and Italian PW to the three North African countries. Those who fell into the hands of the Americans and British were placed in transit camps, pending their removal to permanent camps in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, South Africa, Egypt and India. Those who were captured by the Free French forces remained in the hands of the National Liberation Committee at Algiers.

The PW held in the British and American transit camps were, on the whole, well supplied with food and essentials. They were, however, in great need of winter kit, since many of them were soon to be transferred to temperate or cold climates. Most were clad in the shirts and shorts usually worn by troops fighting in Africa. The ICRC approached the British and American authorities for warm clothing for these men and at once sent off the uniforms supplied by the German Red Cross, particularly for prisoners due to be transferred to Canada.

The Italian and German PW in French hands were less fortunate, as the French population in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia was itself short of necessary supplies. To make good this shortage, which was aggravated by the bad harvest in 1943, the ICRC set out to obtain relief supplies of food, medicaments and clothing for about 38,000 Italian and 40,000 German PW in the camps scattered over the three countries. Consignments from the German Red Cross unfortunately suffered loss and great delay due to transport difficulties in the Mediterranean and on African territory¹. The Italian PW were in a

¹ See pp. 160-161.

still worse plight, as they could not expect any supplies from their own country, which had become a fighting zone. In addition, the total lack of paper prevented them from writing to their families for several months, until the ICRC succeeded in supplying the French authorities with several tons of paper purchased for this purpose in Sweden and elsewhere.

The Allied landing in North Africa also affected food supplies for French PW in Germany, as concerted measures in France and French overseas territory for the purchase and transport of supplies were now impossible.

The ICRC lent effective support to these various relief undertakings, although it was prevented by circumstances from giving them the impetus required. It was only with great difficulty that it secured a few gifts for these PW, who received little or nothing from their home countries. As normal communications between Europe and Africa had broken down, it sought to organize transport for this purpose only. However, despite prolonged negotiations with the Governments of Vichy and Algiers it did not succeed in getting a single ship allocated to it¹. The German authorities, for their part, only used their own transport facilities when they were no longer able to send relief supplies by post. The ICRC were, however, able to arrange five trips to ports in North Africa in 1944, for vessels chartered by the British Red Cross, and one voyage to Casablanca by one of the "Foundation" ships. Relief supplies from or to North Africa were also carried by its vessels between Marseilles and Lisbon, or Gibraltar.

After the Allied landing in the South of France in 1944, the Allied authorities took over the transport of relief supplies from Africa. On the other hand, supplies from Germany intended for PW in Africa were dependent upon the Committee's fleet. As direct contact with Africa had by then ceased, the last shipments from the German Red Cross, which was shortly to come to a standstill, were loaded at Gothenburg and sent on to Philadelphia; from there, they were shipped to Africa by the American Army services, in the spring of 1945.

¹ See pp. 160-161.

From November 1943 to May 1945, the Committee's ships carried from Europe to North Africa 4,300 tons of relief supplies for German PW in particular, and in the opposite direction 3,200 tons for PW taken in North Africa and held in the *Front-stalags* in occupied France. The attack on the *Embla* caused the loss of 221 tons of supplies for German PW.¹

These operations called for unceasing negotiations with the belligerent Governments and National Red Cross Societies. In addition, ICRC delegates in various countries, for instance in Latin America, worked to collect donations and set up relief organizations, especially in behalf of Italian PW. The delegations in North Africa, to whom shipments were addressed, were responsible for the reception, forwarding and distribution of the goods.

¹ See pp. 136-137 and 159.

Chapter 6

Movements of Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees following the Italian Armistice of September 1943

A profound change occurred as a result of the Italian armistice in the relief work done by the ICRC. It was brought about in the main by the following events :

(a)—Stoppage of normal rail traffic to Italy and within Italy, and dislocation of transport to Germany¹.

(b)—Escape of many Allied PW and Italian anti-fascist military personnel and civilians to Switzerland².

(c)—Transfer of Allied PW to Germany.

(d)—Transfer to Germany of Italian military internees and of deportees of all categories, calling for the immediate organization of new relief schemes.

(e)—Resumption of relief distributions to Allied nationals in Italy, after the division of the country into a State fighting with the Allies and a Neo-Fascist Republic.

The present chapter deals with points (c), (d) and (e).

1. Transfer of Allied PW to Germany.

The despatch of relief consignments to Allied PW and civilian internees in Italy became very difficult in the early summer of 1943, owing to the destruction of the railways and the disorganization of the Italian administration. In July, the ICRC informed the principal donors of the situation and told them that it was no longer able to give them the usual

¹ See p. 171.

² See pp. 355 et seq.

guarantees for such consignments. The unanimous opinion was, nevertheless, that the shipments should be continued, despite the risk of loss, in order particularly to build up reserve stocks in the camps.

A few weeks before the Italian armistice, the German authorities in Italy began the evacuation from the Peninsula of all prisoners of war taken by them in Africa, and of a number of civilian internees. In September, they did the same in respect of all Allied nationals whom they could arrest. Owing to the temporary closure of the Italo-Swiss frontier, the ICRC had at first no knowledge of the exact numbers transferred. They were, however, soon informed by the camp leaders and camp commandants in Germany of the arrival of thousands of men; these figures, together with the number of those who had escaped to Switzerland, gave approximation of the number of prisoners remaining in Italy. Many of these, estimated at about 30,000, went into the *maquis* and rejoined the Allied forces in their advance on Northern Italy.

To ensure sufficient relief for Allied prisoners transferred to Germany, the ICRC decided, with the consent of the donors, to make an increase of 10 per cent in the consignments asked for each month by the camp leaders of the large base camps, especially in Southern Germany and Austria. This was about the proportional increase in camp strengths resulting from fresh captures and the continual transfer of prisoners who had been held until then in Italy or the Balkans.

2. *Transfer of Italian anti-fascist nationals to Germany.*

Immediately after the armistice had been signed by Marshal Badoglio, the German military authorities and police, aided by the neo-fascist authorities, made mass arrests of Italian military personnel and civilians and sent them either to Germany, or to camps and prisons in Northern Italy. A few weeks later, the ICRC was in possession of information, which, although not authoritative, enabled it to distinguish three main categories.

(1)—The largest, that of the Italian military internees, comprised the anti-fascist members of the forces who had been

arrested as such and sent to Germany, where considerable groups of them were soon to be found in all camps and labour detachments. During the second half of 1943, their total strength rose to about 500,000.

(2)—There were, furthermore, many thousands of Italian anti-fascist prisoners, that is to say, members of the forces captured whilst fighting with the Allies. After repeated transfers between increasingly overcrowded camps in Germany, these men were as a rule merged, improperly, with the military internees and treated as such, although their status was not in principle the same.

Since they were not given PW status, these internees could not be visited by the Committee's delegates, and thus, under the regulations of the Allied blockade, they could not share in relief supplies from overseas. The President of the ICRC thereupon appealed to the humanity of the German Government. A few days later, the ICRC delegate in Berlin was called to the Chancellery, where he was informed that a special relief service had been organized for these internees by the Italian Embassy, in agreement with the Italian Red Cross set up in Vienna; if the Italian delegation agreed, the ICRC would be allowed to enter the camps. The German authorities, of course, were well aware that in default of this consent, the relief which they recognized as urgent could not be given. Approval therefore had to be obtained from the Italian delegation, who, for political reasons, might have wished to take the credit for this action. The efforts of the delegate in Berlin proved successful. The ICRC delegates were thus granted the right to supervise personally the distribution of relief from overseas, provided they made no mention of the origin of such supplies. The ICRC then informed the British Government and the representative of the American Red Cross at Geneva. Unfortunately, before the lengthy negotiations necessary to obtain the goods had been concluded, the Italian military internees were "converted" into civilian workers, which destroyed the Committee's last chance of giving the desired help.

In default of relief from overseas, the ICRC now made efforts to promote relief schemes on a smaller scale, from sources on

the continent. On the offer of a donation by the Papal Nuncio in Berne, the Committee lent its services for the purchase and transport of a wagon-load of foodstuffs, and its delegation in Berlin assisted the Nuncio in that town to distribute them. It also helped to obtain and despatch railway wagons required for the transport of family parcels from Italy, forwarded in particular by the Milan branch of the Italian Red Cross. The Committee were not, however, able to exercise any supervision over the allocation of these parcels, which the Neo-Fascist committees disposed of as they pleased.

(3)—Finally, a great many Italians in German hands belonged to the class of civilian deportees. Their treatment was the same as that of all nationals of occupied countries held in the concentration camps, or in prisons controlled by the German police. A summary is given below of the painful and almost insoluble problems which confronted the ICRC in trying to help these particular victims of the war¹.

3. *Resumption of relief distribution to Allied nationals.*

After the division of Italy by political and military events, plans for the relief of Allied nationals had to be laid. For the sake of greater efficiency, sub-delegations were formed in the larger towns and supplied with stocks allowing them to take prompt action, whenever necessary. In view of Allied demands, they were, however, instructed to reserve goods from overseas for PW and civilian internees in the camps, and for British and American *isolati*. Allied *isolati* of other nationalities — Yugoslav and French civilians in particular — could only be given aid from the slender stocks arriving from France and the Balkans, supplemented by British and American parcels recovered from railway wagons that were destroyed or looted during bombardments or riots. It had been agreed with the Allied authorities and Red Cross Societies that the delegates were empowered to make whatever use they thought fit of any supplies they might elicit or seize in railway sidings, or

¹ See pp. 73 et seq.

even black-market depots. In this way, the delegate in Rome, with the aid of the local police, took possession of a wagon-load of standard parcels which had been stolen and shunted into a suburban station. These parcels were especially useful at a time when the breakdown in communications with Switzerland prevented the replenishment of stocks; they were distributed in gradual stages to the British, American, French, Yugoslav, Polish, Greek and other nationals who were living secretly in the town and awaiting the arrival of the Allied forces.

Sub-delegations were set up in Florence, Genoa and Turin; in the spring of 1944, the two last named towns were able once more to communicate direct with Switzerland. Another sub-delegation was established in Ponte San Pietro, near Bergamo, and became the centre for relief distributions throughout Northern Italy. Their work was of particular importance at that time, since the German military authorities had set up large transit camps in the plain of Lombardy for PW arriving from the Southern front, pending transfer to Germany. A great many sick and wounded remained in the camp hospitals for months, and the able-bodied themselves were evacuated very slowly, on account of transport difficulties. The delegation at Bergamo therefore made regular distributions of foodstuffs and medical supplies, with occasional issues of clothing, in these assembly centres, of which the most important were near Mantua and Modena. Since the train service had almost entirely ceased and road transport was unreliable on account of skirmishes between the partisans and Neo-Fascist troops, the delegates very often had to find lorries or caravans and take relief supplies themselves to the camps in turn. They so gained experience of a system which was afterwards adopted by the ICRC in Germany, towards the end of hostilities, when no other means of transport existed.

The delegates also issued relief to civilian internees in the camps and to British and American *isolati*, and when supplies of European origin were available, to other Allied *isolati*. The sub-delegation at Turin gave aid, although with some difficulty, to French civilians confined in prisons. The sub-delegation at Genoa carried out similar work within

the triangle Genoa-Florence-Milan, whilst that at Bergamo dealt with Milan and the towns of Lombardy which lay on the route to the Adriatic.

Jugoslav civilians deported to Italy were exposed to particular hardship. In 1942 and 1943, thousands of men, women and children were gathered in large concentration camps where their treatment was ill-defined, about half-way between that of political deportees and civilian internees. Regular visits were an essential prerequisite to relief. Although the Italian authorities made no objection in principle to such visits, definite requests were, however, always refused on one pretext or another. The guarantees necessary before supplies could be obtained from overseas were therefore lacking, and the armistice came before the ICRC was able to act in behalf of these camps. Fortunately, a great many such camps in Southern Italy were taken over by the Allies fairly soon and provisioned by them.

There were also a great many Jugoslavs in the Venice and Trieste areas. Although interned in camps they were, according to the Neo-Fascist authorities, ordinary civilians, and therefore entitled to relief on the same basis as the Jugoslav population.¹ Finally, several thousand of these civilians were dispersed among the prisons of Northern Italy and treated as Allied *isolati*. They were given relief supplies either bought in Europe, or taken from "recovered" parcels from overseas. Many of these parcels came from an illicit store discovered in Milan by the German authorities: it was thought likely, but never confirmed, that this store represented the load of a railway wagon that had been stolen or looted after damage in a raid.

Relief to Allied nationals was continued until their repatriation began after the end of hostilities, but the confused situation in Italy and difficulties of transport always prevented adequate action by the ICRC.

¹ See pp. 487 et seq.

Chapter 7

Detained and Deported Civilians

Civilians in enemy hands¹, as the account of measures taken for their protection has shown, fell into two main categories :

(1)—Civilian internees in the true sense of the term, that is, civilians living in belligerent territory at the outbreak of war and interned because of their enemy nationality ;

(2)—Civilian internees described as “ detainees ” or “ deported civilians ”, or “ civilians deported on administrative grounds ” (in German, *Schutzhäftlinge*²) who were arrested for political or racial motives, or because their presence was considered a danger to the State or the occupation forces. They included nationals of Axis satellites and of annexed or occupied countries, as well as a great many persecuted Germans, who were mainly Jewish.

The present chapter deals with the practical help given by the ICRC to civilians in the second category, who were confined in prisons, concentration camps or closed ghettos and for whom there was no explicit statutory safeguard. This form of relief work was not so wide in its scope as that for PW and for civilian internees with rights similar to those of PW under the 1929 Convention. It was however considerable, especially during the last two years of the War, and passed through several phases, corresponding to the series of concessions granted by the belligerents to detained and deported civilians in Germany, or in territories occupied by that country.

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 567 et seq.

² Persons in “ protective custody ”.

(a) — *First phase, 1939 to 1940. General representations.*

In its general negotiations in behalf of civilians, the ICRC at all times advocated the principle that the same protection should be granted to all civilians, without distinction of race, nationality, religious belief or political opinion. In practice, however, the Detaining Power insisted on drawing certain distinctions, with which the ICRC perforce had to comply, in the absence of any treaty stipulations on which they could take a stand. The Tokyo Draft had, in fact, prescribed not only legal protection but the right to receive relief supplies, for civilians of all categories in enemy hands. This Draft was, against the wishes of the Committee, not adopted as a whole by the belligerents: thus only civilians of the first category could benefit by the terms, where applicable, of the 1929 Prisoners of War Convention¹. For detained and deported civilians therefore, special representations had to be made to each Government concerned.

(b) — *Second phase, 1941. Special representations.*

Upon the occupation by the Axis Powers of the greater part of Europe, millions of civilians fell into the hands of those Powers and were confined in prisons or concentration camps. As these camps were chiefly in Germany, or in countries occupied by the German forces, the ICRC made application in the first instance to the German Government, since obviously no relief of any kind could be undertaken without its consent.

The German authorities however placed detained and deported civilians on the same footing as persons arrested and imprisoned under common law for security reasons. The majority were in fact not nationals of enemy countries, nor as a rule even aliens, but possessed or had possessed, before becoming stateless, either German nationality, or that of an annexed country. The measures applied to these people were, therefore, from the German point of view and that of the satellite States, strictly a matter of internal policy, with which the ICRC might not interfere.

¹ See Vol. I, page 569.

In view of the weakness of its legal position the Committee was obliged to act with prudence. The worse the situation of the detained and deported civilians became, however, the more energetically the ICRC made its demands; and the more the Axis Powers suffered strategic or political reverses, the greater were the Committee's chances of success. The special representations in regard to prisons and concentration camps in Germany, as in the annexed or occupied countries, were usually made through the ICRC delegation in Berlin and the German Red Cross. Towards the end of the war, the President of the ICRC made personal contact with some of the German leaders who at that time had gained control of internal affairs.

Bohemia and Moravia. — In the summer of 1942, the German Red Cross informed the ICRC that the occupying authorities in Prague had given permission for the despatch of medical supplies to Theresienstadt (Terezin), the largest camp for Jews in the country. A trial consignment of a few parcels was sent to the address given, *Lagerkommando Theresienstadt*, but no receipt was ever returned to Geneva. Theresienstadt, where there were about 40,000 Jews deported from various countries, was a relatively privileged ghetto, and the visit of a delegate of the ICRC in Berlin was permitted, in June 1944, as a special concession.

Slovakia and Jugoslavia. — The attempts made by the ICRC to intervene in behalf of detained and deported civilians met with constant opposition from the German authorities in occupation. The ICRC delegates, who were supported by the Slovak and Serbian Red Cross Societies, were always debarred from visiting the Slovak camp at Sered, which held Jews awaiting deportation to Germany; the same applied to the camp at Zemun, near Belgrade. The delegate at Bratislava was however on two occasions, during November 1944, allowed to visit the camp at Marianka, where a few American Jews were interned.

Croatia. — The delegate of the ICRC at Zagreb succeeded in obtaining an undertaking from the Croat Government in

January 1944, that the 1929 PW Convention would be observed, where applicable, in respect of detained civilians. He had, however, to make repeated representations in order to get this decision put into practice. After permission had at last been given, in June 1944, for the despatch of relief consignments twice a month, the detainees received foodstuffs, clothing and medical supplies over a certain period. In July 1944, two months before the authorities in occupation abruptly intervened, the delegate was even able to visit the concentration camps at Jasenovac, Stara Gradiska and Gredjani-Salas. He did not fail to call the attention of the camp commandants to the reckoning they might have to meet, if they allowed the civilians who were detained and deported to be brutally ill-used. As a result of this warning, conditions in the camps were somewhat improved.

Hungary. — The ICRC delegate in Budapest was able, in the autumn of 1944, to visit the concentration camps at Kistarcsa and Sarvar, where detained and deported Jews were confined. Here he distributed food and medical supplies received from Geneva, or purchased locally with funds made available to him.

Rumania. — Similar action was taken in this country, and the delegate visited the ghettos for Jews deported to the area lying between the Bug and the Dniester, in Transnistria¹.

Greece. — The main difficulties had already been overcome by the end of 1942. The Italian Red Cross informed the ICRC, on December 11, that the Committee's delegates in Athens had authority to visit camps and prisons in the territory occupied by the Italian forces, and to hand out relief supplies. The ICRC was thus able to organize relief consignments, and at once approached the Governments and Red Cross Societies of Great Britain and the United States to this end, with the support of the Greek Government in exile in London. In February 1943, the Italian authorities even authorized the

¹ For the mass deportation of Jews from Hungary and Rumania, see Vol. I, pp. 647 and 653.

issue of articles of uniform to Greek detainees, on condition that all military badges were removed.

Conditions in the concentration camps and prisons were appreciably better in Greece than in Germany. All detained civilians, except prisoners under common law, were allowed to receive parcels from home. In the spring of 1943, the Management Committee for Relief in Greece granted double daily rations to all civilian detainees held in seven concentration camps and 37 prisons in Athens and the provinces. During the summer of 1943, Swedish vessels brought 40,000 standard parcels from overseas, and the delegation of the ICRC, with the help of the Greek Red Cross, set up distribution centres in Athens and Salonika.

The delegates pressed the German and Italian authorities to improve conditions in the camps they had visited. They were never allowed to enter the camp at Haidari, near Athens, which had the worst reputation, and were only admitted to the camp at Goudhi shortly before the release of detained and deported civilians in October 1944. The sub-delegation at Salonika managed to make regular distributions of foodstuffs in the camps of Pavlo Mela and Vassiliades from 1944 onwards. In May 1944, a Greek medical officer wrote: "Your parcels are meeting a dire need and becoming a vital source of strength to the exhausted civilian detainees."

Germany. — As early as January 1941, the ICRC applied to the German Red Cross for permission to send food to detained and deported civilians in the camp at Oranienburg, but this was refused. Earlier a similar request made on May 20, 1940, concerning the camps at Drancy, Compiègne and in North Africa, had already been turned down by the German Foreign Office. In the summer of 1942, the ICRC was informed by this Ministry that parcels could not be sent to German citizens in concentration camps. A little later, however, in August, a fresh request was treated with more sympathy, and the delegate in Berlin was told that detained aliens, not only at Oranienburg but at Dachau also, could receive small food parcels from their relatives, on condition that the contents could be quickly

consumed. Family parcels were thus at last authorized for detained and deported civilians of enemy nationality, and were forwarded through the ICRC.

After further representations in October 1942, in behalf of detained civilians in Germany and Alsace, family parcels of foodstuffs and clothing were allowed for persons detained in Haguenau Prison ; an exception was made in the case of those who had been arrested on the grounds of political activities, or for imperilling the security of the State or of the authorities in occupation. From February 1943 onwards, this concession was extended to all other camps and prisons in Germany.

The ICRC declined, however, to limit its action merely to that of an intermediary between the detainees and their relatives. It claimed the right to send, itself, consignments of foodstuffs, clothing and medicaments, and to supervise their distribution in the camps. The Committee moreover insisted on ascertaining the situation within these camps and the number of occupants, by nationality. Its efforts were not entirely fruitless. In March 1943, the German Foreign Office informed the ICRC delegation in Berlin that the Committee and the National Red Cross Societies would henceforth be allowed to forward individual parcels to detained and deported aliens whose names and addresses were known to them. This privilege was, however, withheld from those accused of offences against the German State or the German forces. There was no limit to the number of parcels, but the amount of foodstuffs sent to any one detainee could not exceed his personal needs ; any surplus would be distributed amongst fellow-detainees who received no parcels. The ICRC delegates were not allowed access to the concentration camps, and the German Red Cross and camp commandants were forbidden to communicate lists of occupants, or even camp strengths.

The concession granted by the German authorities was therefore very slight, and indeed more apparent than real, since on the one hand, only individual parcels were permitted, whilst on the other, the authorities made it impossible for the senders to obtain the necessary data for consignments of this kind. Nevertheless, the ICRC was not deterred, but at once

set to work on their relief scheme, although they had at that time only some sixty names and addresses of civilian detainees in all the camps in Germany.

(c) — *Third phase, 1943 to 1944. Despatch of individual and collective parcels.*

The ICRC exercised its ingenuity to surmount the obstacles raised by the German authorities, and succeeded in obtaining from private and unofficial sources the names and addresses of a number of deported and detained civilians. This allowed the despatch of individual relief supplies to several concentration camps, from June 1943 onwards.

The result of this experiment far exceeded expectations. Only a few weeks later the first receipts arrived in Geneva bearing the signature of the consignees. By August 1943, the ICRC had in this way collected receipts signed by Belgian, Dutch, French, Norwegian and Polish detained and deported civilians. Subsequently, a growing number of parcels became available for the concentration camps, and these were forwarded, as soon as new names became known, to Belgian, Czech, Dutch, French, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish and Yugoslav detainees. The gratitude with which these parcels were received in the camps, where underfeeding was having disastrous effects, may well be imagined.

At Geneva, the card-index for detained and deported civilians slowly grew. News of the arrival of the first parcels had spread through the camps; the detainees who were allowed to write had told their relatives, and the ICRC then began to receive many requests, especially from Norway and Poland, that relief parcels should be sent, with all the data required. Lists also reached Geneva by secret channels.

Having overcome the first obstacle, the Committee was faced with that of the blockade, which was no less serious. The Allies only allowed parcels from overseas to be sent to camps where ICRC delegates had access and could supervise the distribution of relief supplies. This was possible only in camps for PW or for interned civilians on the same footing as

PW, who had equal rights under the 1929 Convention. The blockade authorities therefore refused, despite the Committee's repeated applications¹, to allow goods to be imported into Europe which were intended for the concentration camps, where neither visits, nor supervision were permitted by the Germans. The said authorities also prohibited the transfer of funds which had been brought from occupied countries and deposited in Allied countries for the use of the refugee Governments in London.

The ICRC was therefore obliged to seek the necessary commodities within the blockaded zone. In spite of the general scarcity in almost the whole of Europe, the Committee managed to secure large quantities of tinned meat, biscuits, jam, sugar and other foodstuffs in the Balkan States, especially Rumania, Slovakia and Hungary, with the aid of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross. These purchases were paid for with funds obtained by the Committee in Switzerland, through the representatives of Governments and Red Cross Societies, as well as various national and foreign relief organizations in that country. The goods were warehoused in bond at Geneva, where as many as 9,000 parcels were packed daily. From the autumn of 1943 until May 1945, about 1,112,000 parcels, with a total weight of 4,500 tons, were sent off to the concentration camps in Germany².

The ICRC was, of course, unable to verify that the whole of these relief goods were handed over to the consignees; in any case, this risk did not deter the senders. When parcels were confiscated in certain camps, the Committee soon had knowledge of the fact, and at once suspended the despatch of further supplies; this happened in the case of Mauthausen. In general, the relief scheme worked well and was occasionally even aided in some degree by the camp commandants. Information from escaped detainees and letters from the concentration camps provided very useful evidence. For instance, a detainee at Oranienburg notified the ICRC regularly of the exact number of parcels distributed, or stolen. There is, at any rate, no

¹ See pp. 28 et seq.

² For details, see pp. 335 et seq.

doubt that the parcels saved thousands of lives. As one of the men wrote: "Your parcels were inestimable; in some cases the arrival of a single parcel gave new life to those on whom starvation had nearly finished its work".

In spite of the extensive card-index set up by the Committee, the effect of the individual parcel system was unfortunately to limit the number of persons benefited. In order to enlarge the circle and to reach even those deportees who were placed in the category "Nacht und Nebel", and whose names were never to be divulged, the Committee decided, during the summer of 1944, to send collective parcels to the concentration camps. This decision was in disregard of the conditions laid down by the Detaining Power, which however became rather less adamant after the Allied landing on the Continent and the liberation of the occupied countries. The scheme showed more chance of success than in the past, and it was incumbent on the ICRC to make the attempt, although the supervision of collective consignments appeared even more hazardous than that of individual parcels. The Committee was indeed urged by the Governments concerned to increase at all costs the volume of relief supplies sent to detained civilians.

As European resources were steadily diminishing, some relaxation of the blockade regulations had to be obtained. Fortunately, through the energetic intervention of the War Refugee Board in Washington, set up in January 1944 by President Roosevelt, the Allied authorities yielded to the insistent requests of the ICRC. The American supplies granted to the Joint Commission for transmission to the concentration camps¹, which did not arrive in any considerable quantity until the end of 1944, provided relief for thousands of civilian detainees during the closing months of the war.

Some camp commandants prohibited the return of receipts, while others, such as the commandant at Dachau, allowed it. The receipts which reached Geneva bore several names (sometimes as many as fifteen), which were immediately filed in the

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission, Geneva, 1948, pp. 194 et seq.

card-index¹. The ICRC thus used the information supplied by detained civilians to form an estimate of camp strengths. If, for instance, Geneva was informed that seven Poles in a certain camp had shared a parcel, the inference was drawn that the number of Poles in this camp was seven times greater than that of the parcels sent.

In addition to foodstuffs, the ICRC despatched a certain amount of clothing and pharmaceutical supplies. With regard to clothing, it had to be content with what could be found in the European market, since the textile shortage had become so acute that no country overseas would authorize the export of clothing. Underclothing of artificial wool was bought, and during the winter of 1944-1945, a good number of Belgian deportees were supplied with woollen garments given by the Belgian Government.

Pharmaceutical supplies (vitamins, restoratives and disinfectants) were sent as standard parcels and were accompanied by detailed instructions enabling the recipients to make use of the contents in the absence of medical supervision. Each of these parcels contained :

100 tablets	Decalcit
50 "	Redoxon
40 "	Protovit
20 "	Saridon
20 "	Coramin-caffeine
20 "	Entero-vioform
1 tube	Cibazol ointment—5 p.c. 20 gr.
1 tin	Neocide 50 gr.
1 roll gauze,	5 × 5 cm.
1 roll gauze,	10 × 5 cm.
6 squares	cellulose cottonwool

Finally, mention should be made of intellectual and spiritual assistance, such as books, cases of Communion wine for French chaplains, also Bibles and New Testaments, chiefly for the French and Norwegian deportees.

¹ Facsimiles of these receipts are shown in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, No. 320, August 1945, page 612.

Parcels were sent to Dachau, Buchenwald, Sangerhausen, Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, Flossenburg, Landsberg-am-Lech, Flöha, Ravensbrück, Hamburg-Neuengamme, Mauthausen, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, to camps near Vienna and in Central and Southern Germany. The principal recipients were Belgians, Dutch, French, Greeks, Italians, Norwegians, Poles, and stateless Jews.

This relief work could not unfortunately be extended to all concentration camps, because a great many remained unknown to the ICRC until the end of the war. Moreover, the ICRC was long prevented by the blockade from procuring sufficient funds and goods. When it could do so at the very end of the war, transport had been seriously curtailed by the destruction of roads and railways.

(d) — *Fourth phase, January to June 1945. Admittance of the ICRC delegates to the Concentration Camps.*

In the chaotic condition of Germany after the invasion during the final months of the war, the camps received no food supplies at all and starvation claimed an increasing number of victims. Itself alarmed by this situation, the German Government at last informed the ICRC on February 1, 1945, in reply to a request of October 2, 1944, that individual and collective relief parcels could be despatched to French and Belgian detainees. In March 1945, discussions between the President of the ICRC and General of the SS Kaltenbrunner¹ gave even more decisive results. Relief could henceforth be distributed by the ICRC, and one delegate was authorized to stay in each camp, on condition that he undertook not to leave it before the end of the war. For the first time, therefore, the concentration camps were open to the Committee.

In order to take advantage of this last-minute concession, road transport had to be improvised, for there were now no trains in service throughout Germany. The efforts made by the ICRC in this respect are recorded elsewhere². Suffice it

¹ See Vol. I, page 620.

² See pp. 184 et seq.

to say that road convoys at once left for Germany, and that their loads of foodstuffs were issued either in the concentration camps, or to the many escaped or evacuated detainees wandering on the roads in a state of indescribable distress ¹. Between January 1 and April 15, 1945, 300,000 parcels weighing 1,200 tons in all were sent to concentration camps by road and rail.

On the return journey to Switzerland, the vehicles brought back women, children, the old and sick who were picked up on the roadside.

(e) — *Post-war activities, July to December, 1945. Collective consignments to released civilian detainees and deportees.*

For several months after the close of hostilities, the ICRC continued its relief work for detained and deported civilians who could not be repatriated at once, and who were lodged in the centres for Displaced Persons. Food, medical supplies and clothing were sent to Dachau, Munich, Mauthausen, Linz, Innsbruck, Lübeck, Bayreuth, Salzburg, Leipzig, Prague and Pilsen, for Polish, Czech, Baltic, Italian, Spanish, Yugoslav and other nationals.

From April 15 to June 30, 1945, over 300 trucks, in 34 columns, were sent to the areas occupied by the Allied forces, with 1,030 tons of supplies comprising :

- 272 tons for the French
- 110 tons for the Belgians
- 195 tons for the Poles
- 143 tons of War Refugee Board parcels for all nationals
- 228 tons for the Jews
- 82 tons for various nationals (Czechs, Italians, Dutch, Yugoslavs and others).

In the autumn of 1945, the ICRC ceased to send relief supplies to Displaced Persons, who henceforth were assisted by the Allied authorities, UNRRA and national relief organizations.

¹ See delegates' reports and the map showing the principal concentration camps, published in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, No. 327, March 1946, page 246.

Chapter 8

The Final Phase of the War in Europe

After October 1944, the International Committee's task became more onerous and difficult.

In the first place, after the Allied landings in Normandy and the South of France, the supply of parcels from overseas stopped altogether. The second of these landings and the fighting that followed moreover halted the despatch of relief from France direct to French PW in Germany. Fortunately, the ICRC was able to draw on the stocks it had providently built up in Switzerland. Once already, before the armistice between France and Germany in 1940, Geneva had acted as intermediary between the camps of French PW on the one hand, and France and her colonial empire on the other. Now a similar arrangement made it possible to keep up the supply of food for the French PW.

Meanwhile the situation in Germany was steadily deteriorating. Even the regulation rations, long since inadequate, were now no longer guaranteed to PW. As the German armies lost ground in the East and West, a hasty evacuation of the camps near the frontiers followed. Camps in Central Germany became overcrowded, while thousands of men, on the march without a break towards new places of detention, reached the limit of their endurance. These constant and sudden transfers so thoroughly intermingled the personnel of the camps that Geneva had no reliable information on camp strengths and relative numbers by nationality, not to mention nominal lists. Further, the destruction of railways and rolling stock paralysed transport.

Thus, relief work was at the same time urgently needed and seriously impeded. It was nevertheless carried on by new methods adapted to the circumstances.

After persistent applications to the Allied, German, and Swiss Authorities, the ICRC received some French, Belgian and Swiss wagons, in addition to the German railway cars still at its disposal. It was thus able to continue its consignments to the camps still in being and accessible by rail, and even to increase these shipments by 25 to 30 per cent, in order to provide for the increased camp strengths due to the concentration of PW. The ICRC also sent considerable quantities of relief to the big assembly centres for PW, internees and deportees, and set up depots which enabled the delegates to convey supplies in trucks to neighbouring camps and columns on the march. A first block-train¹, composed of 50 cars of medicaments and medical equipment, left Switzerland on March 6, for Moosburg in Southern Germany, where a supply centre was set up. Other block-trains followed, each carrying between 500 and 600 tons of supplies.

Many camps, however, could not, or could no longer, be reached by rail. The ICRC then used the numerous motor trucks which, after repeated requests, they had succeeded in obtaining from the Allies. A first group of trucks set off for the Eger, Carlsbad and Marienbad districts, across which the columns of PW evacuated from Poland and Upper Silesia were passing. A second group was sent to the North and remained attached to the Lübeck supply centre, which furnished relief supplies to neighbouring camps and to columns of PW from East Prussia ².

By the time these railway wagons and lorries were ready for work, the invading Allied and Soviet Armies were already on the point of cutting Germany in two, and the ICRC could no longer communicate, either direct or through their Delegation in Berlin, with the German High Command, then established at Torgau. The ICRC therefore made contact at Constance with officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and of the SS

¹ Or "set-train".

² For technical details concerning block-trains and lorries, see below, pp. 166 et seq., and 184 et seq.

who had retired to South Germany, and who were in fact directing the internal affairs of the country. It was they who authorized convoys to cross the German-Swiss frontier and to supply food to all camps in Germany.

Mention must be made of another feature of relief work during the last phase of hostilities. From February 1945, supplies could no longer be issued in the usual manner. Delegates with the convoys could have no idea of the nationality of PW they would meet on the way, and it is clear that when they came across men dying of hunger in a camp or on the road, they could have no justification for refusing to some what they gave to others. It was decided, therefore, to use the pooling system, so called because standard food parcels sent by the ICRC were, in each camp, pooled without regard to their origin (American, British, French, Belgian, etc.), and placed in the custody of camp leaders representing the various nationalities. These stocks were then issued equally to all Allied prisoners and civilian internees. The idea was, moreover, further developed. The ICRC sent telegrams on April 18, 1945, to the commandants of sixty-two camps, informing them that relief supplies should be shared out among all prisoners, without distinction. Thus Russian, Italian, Rumanian and other PW also received a share. Shortly afterwards, pooling was extended to include even civilian detainees and deportees.

As the normal system of distribution by nationality or specified camp had to be abandoned immediately, the ICRC decided to act without first obtaining consent from the donors. The majority of the contributors, however, and in particular the American and British Red Cross Societies and the French and Belgian Governments, informed the Committee that they consented. Other Red Cross Societies gave their tacit approval. Moreover, in a Note sent on August 17, 1944, to all belligerent Powers, dealing with the food supply of PW, internees and civilians in Europe on the cessation of hostilities, the ICRC had already alluded to the possibility of pooling in the future and said: "Should the internal organization of the Detaining State break down at a time when it is urgently necessary to forward relief consignments, it would be, for humane as well

as practical reasons, difficult and maybe impossible to issue supplies only to nationals of certain countries and certain categories of persons. Any such plan for assistance should, in our view, apply as far as possible without distinction to all PW, workers and deportees in the area being supplied ”.

FOOD SUPPLIES FOR THE DIFFERENT AREAS IN GERMANY

At this point a few technical and statistical details of relief work carried out in behalf of PW between October 1944 and the armistice of May 1945 may be useful.

According to information supplied by the American Supreme Command in Europe there were, in March 1945, some 2,200,000 Allied PW lodged in 70 camps. These included :

75,850 Americans	87,100 Italians
65,700 Belgians	122,100 Jugoslavs.
199,500 British	69,300 Poles
10,200 Dutch	784,300 Russians
754,600 French	

As already mentioned, the retreat of the German Army led to the evacuation of the camps that were in danger of falling into the hands of the invading armies. American and British PW were mainly transferred to the East, and Polish and Russian PW to the West, in order to prevent escaping prisoners from joining up with their own forces. Later, the continuing advance of both the Allied and Russian forces obliged the German military authorities to take other measures: they assembled all PW in three main areas in the centre of the country, one in the north at Lübeck, another in the centre at Altengrabow, and a third at Moosburg in the south.

These transfers were carried out in circumstances of extreme hardship. The PW had only a few hours notice to prepare for their departure. As the railways had been destroyed and there was a shortage of rolling stock, they had to cover the long distances to their new camps on foot; they were often obliged to march 40 to 50 kilometres a day, for eight to ten days. Rations,

too, were short so that the ICRC had to supply food not only to the camps, but also to columns of PW and detainees on the road across Germany.

(a) *Eastern Area.*

Evacuation of the Eastern area began in January 1945. Earlier, in October 1944, there had been the surrender in Warsaw of the Polish underground army commanded by General Bor-Komorowski. Under the terms of the capitulation, the German authorities had granted the benefit of the 1929 PW Convention to all Polish combatants captured since the beginning of the rising, including women. For the first time, therefore, the ICRC was called upon to help some thousands of women PW and, in addition, children who had gone with their mothers into captivity. The Polish Red Cross and various Polish organizations abroad, for instance in the United States, made generous donations to the ICRC for this work. The relief for the Polish insurgents was the last provided in conformity with the rule of distribution by nationality.

Prisoners evacuated from the Eastern area were of all nationalities. The Luckenwalde Camp, for instance, contained all the American PW of Oflag 64 and Stalag III B, British PW from Stalag Luft III at Sagan, Polish PW hitherto held in camps in Hungary, Norwegian PW transferred from Schildberg, and lastly Italian and French PW. Delegates of the ICRC were able to visit this camp and to issue 150,000 American parcels, brought up by rail in February, to all PW without distinction.

Prisoners from camps in Upper Silesia reached the west via Czechoslovakia. Detainees and civilian deportees from concentration camps in East Germany, bound either for the Hamburg-Neuengamme Camp or for Dachau in the south, were also on the roads. Confusion was at its worst when the endless columns of PW, civilian internees and deportees were joined by civilian refugees considered as being of German race (*Volksdeutsche*), and coming from Bessarabia, Poland, the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe.

(b) *Northern Area. Lübeck.*

By February 1945, over a quarter of all Allied PW in Germany had been, or were being transferred, and the ICRC had quickly to assume the immense task of supplying the various assembly centres with food, despite the growing transport problem. For the Northern area, the Committee drew on parcels warehoused at Gothenburg and sent to Lübeck, where the delegation had built up a large stock of foodstuffs. From this depot, which also received goods from Switzerland by motor truck, distribution was made as far as possible by rail, but the arrival of shipments was extremely uncertain. Letters from camp leaders were often lost in transit. Some reached Geneva after considerable delay and showed that parcels had taken several weeks, or even months, to arrive at their destination.

On the request of the German authorities and with the aid of information supplied by them, the delegation of the ICRC in Berlin immediately organized relief work on the roads followed by the PW and civilian internees. As many of these were in the neighbourhood of Neubrandenburg, the delegation set up a supply centre in that town. It was able to procure two lorries and asked the German railways for the use of 18 railway cars. On February 12, both lorries were loaded with foodstuffs at the Committee's warehouse at Lübeck and left for Neubrandenburg. They first went to the Rostock-Anklam district and, on the way, left goods at Demmin for various groups of PW who had already arrived there. When the railway cars became available, it was possible to convey large quantities of foodstuffs to Neubrandenburg.

Immediately on arrival in this district, the delegate drew up, in agreement with the German authorities, a general plan for supplying food to the columns of PW on the march. In order to reach those on secondary roads, depots were set up at Anklam, Waren, Neustrelitz, Parchim, Demmin and Teterow. The delegate arranged for receipts to be given and for a regular check to avoid losses.

The PW on the march received one parcel each. Some

thousands of parcels were dumped in the above stores. Finally, supplies were sent to the following camps, at the rate of one parcel for each man :

Oflag 64 Neubrandenburg	680	parcels
Luftlager IV Gross-Tychow. . . .	6,500	"
Oflag II D Gross-Born	5,000	"
Oflag 65 Berkenbrügge	1,500	"
Oflag II B Arnswalde	2,300	"
Group of American PW coming from Hammerstein.	485	"
Group of British PW coming from Stalag XX B	1,000	"
Wehrmacht Prison at Graudenz. .	1,000	"
PW just arrived at Stalag II A Neubrandenburg	1,500	"

To carry out this scheme of relief as speedily as possible, the work had to go on night and day. In Neubrandenburg itself, parcels were issued under the control of the French camp leader, with the full approval of his American, British, Polish and Yugoslav colleagues. In the course of their many journeys, the trucks picked up sick PW and took them to Neubrandenburg Military Hospital.

Whilst keeping in touch with the supply centre at Neubrandenburg, the delegates then went to the Lübeck-Hamburg area to meet PW coming from the Eastern territories, and supplied them with food, using trucks placed at the disposal of the ICRC by the American and Swedish Red Cross Societies.

A further six trucks left Geneva on March 7, 1945, carrying 20,000 litres of fuel, and reached Lübeck just as great streams of Allied PW were arriving in the neighbourhood. In order to feed them, the vessels from Gothenburg had to be unloaded without delay. As the delegation could not do this by itself, it enlisted the voluntary help of French PW from Oflag X B at Lübeck, a so-called "reprisal camp" for officers suspected of being supporters of General de Gaulle, others guilty of attempts to escape, and those of Jewish origin.

In North Germany, there was an issue of relief (standard food parcels and medical kits), which had arrived in Europe by way of Gothenburg. Clothing for French PW, provided by the American Red Cross, mufflers for American PW and some blankets for the British came through the same port.

(c) *Central Area. Altengradow.*

The approach of the Western Allies and the Soviet Armies made this Central area almost inaccessible by rail or road. There had been a plan to organize a relief depot at Altengradow, where Stalag XI A, now a large assembly camp, was situated. That scheme, however, had to be abandoned, because this town could be reached neither from Switzerland, nor from Lübeck. The PW therefore depended for food entirely on the parcels which Allied planes succeeded in dropping to them by parachute. They were, however, released earlier than those in the other areas.

Road convoys which were intended for Stalag IV B at Mühlberg, Oflag IV C at Colditz, Stalag IV G at Oschatz and Stalag IV A at Hohenstein, could not reach their destination and were unloaded at Moosburg in the Southern area.

(d) *Southern Area. Moosburg.*

The Southern Area, being adjacent to Switzerland, fared better than the others in the matter of food. It was also allocated the relief shipments that could not be forwarded to the Central area.

A representative of the ICRC met officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Army High Command and the SS at Uffing (Bavaria), and informed them that the ICRC wished to set up depots in this area. Although they acknowledged the necessity of such stocks, the Germans were at first very much against their being placed near PW camps. Finally, however, they agreed with the ICRC that it was not feasible to set them up anywhere but in Moosburg. This Bavarian village on the Isar, north of Munich, held Stalag VII A, which had become an assembly camp, and contained as many as 80,000, perhaps

100,000 PW of all nationalities. It was to this place that on March 6 and 28, and April 12, three block-trains of 50 wagons each were sent, carrying foodstuffs and medicaments, and escorted by delegates of the ICRC. One of these trains, the arrival of which was acclaimed with cheers by the PW, served to provision Stalag VII A itself ; the consignments carried by the two following trains were taken by road to neighbouring camps.

At Moosburg, all the warehouses were found to be occupied by civilians who had fled from Munich after the bombardments, and there was nowhere to store the relief supplies. However, with the help of the station master and the camp commandant, a barn and three other storehouses, as well as the station warehouse were finally made available. Under the delegate's directions, French and British PW unloaded the 93,312 parcels with all speed. The train left immediately and, on March 11, arrived at Buchs, on the Swiss frontier. The storehouses were guarded by six French, five British and five American NCOs, in their turn guarded by patrols of German soldiers.

On April 4, two other block-trains left for Stalag XIII A at Sulzbach and Stalag XIII B at Weiden. Unfortunately, military operations prevented their getting through, and they had to be diverted to Moosburg. Two special trains of twenty German cars each, not escorted by delegates of the Committee, also failed to reach their destination, Stalag V B at Villingen, and the supplies they carried were issued to PW in the Augsburg area.

As there was no further room at Moosburg, the German authorities asked the ICRC to establish a new depot at Ravensburg, a small town 20 kilometres from the Lake of Constance, where large premises could be reserved for the exclusive use of the Committee. This depot, placed under the supervision of delegates, could hold 7,000 tons of stores, and the vehicles of the ICRC could be parked, repaired and re-fuelled there.

In April, therefore, two block-trains, consisting in all of 110 cars, left for Ravensburg, from which point relief supplies were taken by lorry to PW and concentration camps within a radius of 300 kilometres. Ravensburg was soon afterwards

evacuated by the German forces and occupied by the French. Meanwhile, the convoys of the ICRC continued their journeys through the French lines. Food could thus be provided immediately for released PW. During the days preceding the French advance beyond Ravensburg, the Committee's delegate handed out some 24,000 food parcels to Allied PW in labour detachments, and to those on the roads.

The ICRC followed the same procedure during the second fortnight in April at Landeck, near the Arlberg Pass in the Tyrol. It was learned that mass removals of PW from Upper Austria towards the Tyrol, from Lower Austria towards the country round Passau and Braunau were in progress. One of the delegates found some thousands of PW in Landeck Camp, which was attached to Stalag XVIII C at Markt-Pongau, where many columns were also arriving. Two block-trains were therefore unloaded at Landeck, but distribution could not be carried out on a large scale until after the surrender, because the roads were too congested to permit any traffic.

* * *

It may safely be said that the relief schemes carried out in the winter of 1944-45 and the spring of 1945 saved tens of thousands of lives.

Allied Red Cross Societies played an important part in the success of these efforts, not only by sending great quantities of supplies to Geneva, but also by obtaining transport facilities from various Governments.

Camp leaders also made a most valuable contribution ; it was they who kept the ICRC informed of the numbers and needs of PW, of the state of communications, and of the best method of conveying the supplies to each camp. Furthermore, the teams or committees formed by all the camp leaders in each camp often secured wide powers of discretion from the Detaining Authorities in the supervision and issue of relief.

The ICRC itself maintained unremitting pressure on the Allied and German authorities for the supply of means to carry out its welfare work. The Committee's experience, its

moral standing, and above all the confidence its impartiality inspired in all the belligerents, enabled it to aid the victims of war in pursuance of its traditional role of neutral intermediary, even during the period when the war, nearing its end, was also at its climax.

Chapter 9

The Period of Repatriation

The American and British Red Cross Societies had given previous notice that when the fighting ceased, the Allied military authorities would themselves take care of the nationals of the United Nations who were found in the respective zones of occupation. Nevertheless, the task of the ICRC did not come to an end with the armistice in Europe. They were requested by the Inter-Allied Military High Command (SHAEF)¹, to give their services in helping them to supply relief to Allied PW, for whom no means of immediate repatriation were available.

This relief work met with very great difficulties owing (1) to the shortage of transport ; (2) to the breakdown of direct telegraphic communication to various parts of Germany ; and above all (3) to the immense numbers suddenly released. These included not only hundreds of thousands of PW, but civilian workers, deportees and detainees, each group to be counted in millions. All these were classified on release either as ex-PW (RAMP)² or Displaced Persons³.

Without waiting for arrangements to be made with SHAEF, the ICRC began its relief work from May 8, 1945, as far as available transport allowed. The necessary information was supplied by its own delegates and the representatives of SHAEF. Large amounts of foodstuffs, medical supplies, tobacco, soap

¹ SHAEF — Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces.

² RAMP — Released Allied Military Personnel.

³ With regard to Displaced Persons, see pp. 118 et seq.

and clothing were sent into Germany by rail and road. The Ravensburg Distribution Centre was kept in operation under the direction of a permanent sub-delegation; the Landeck (Tyrol) sub-delegation also had some stocks at its disposal, and the delegation at Uffing (Bavaria) distributed the relief supplies stored at Moosburg.

Conversations between the representatives of SHAEF and the ICRC took place at Kreuzlingen, on the German-Swiss frontier, on May 22 and 25, 1945, and in Paris during June. As a result of these talks the scheme for supplying nationals of the United Nations countries was brought into line with the repatriation procedure, and the stocks held by the ICRC in Switzerland and abroad were liquidated in the most rational way. These stocks were used to augment the rations supplied by the Allied military authorities to ex-PW and ex-civilian internees in Germany, until their repatriation.

Under the new scheme, the ICRC drew on the General Pool of relief supplies built up in Switzerland with stocks of British and American origin, and despatched them at the formal request and on the instructions of SHAEF. The pooled stock warehoused in Switzerland represented about 30,000 tons of foodstuffs on June 1, 1945. Some relatively small relief stocks, which were the property of Allied Red Cross Societies and had not been placed in the General Pool, were distributed in accordance with the donors' wishes, in so far as the Committee had the means of transport. Other relief supplies which did not form part of the General Pool and were still lying in port at Lisbon and Toulon, were returned to the donors.

By the use of air transport, the repatriation of ex-PW and of civilian internees from United Nations countries, was speedily carried out. The data supplied by SHAEF show that about 1,500 transport planes and bombers took part during May in this operation and that they carried up to 36,000 persons a day, when weather conditions were good. For these people, therefore, only a small proportion of the available stocks was drawn on, and it was decided by SHAEF and the French Ministry for PW, Deportees and Refugees that the stocks remaining should be issued to Displaced Persons who were

nationals of United Nations countries, with the exception of four million American standard parcels. These were set aside for possible future requirements of ex-prisoners of war ¹.

¹ See pp. 118 et seq. for an account of the unexpected difficulties met in forwarding parcels, and especially stocks of pharmaceutical supplies, to the organizations now responsible. For supplies to PW who were nationals of the Axis countries, see the following chapter.

Chapter 10

Relief to Axis Prisoners of War after the End of Hostilities

§ 1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

At the end of hostilities in Europe, the relief work of the ICRC in behalf of prisoners of war necessarily resumed the character it had had at the beginning of the war. At that time (1940), virtually all PW were held by one belligerent, so that any intervention made by the ICRC was in fact almost entirely unilateral, although in principle based on reciprocity. After the autumn of 1945, the situation was reversed, and the only prisoners remaining were nationals of Axis countries, chiefly Austrian, German, Hungarian, Italian and Japanese.

At least one of the countries concerned, namely Germany, no longer existed as a political body, and the status of PW was not in fact immediately granted to German combatants who had laid down their arms under the terms of surrender¹. The military authorities lost no time in distinguishing between war criminals, to whom the Geneva Conventions obviously did not apply, and all the other detainees from Axis countries, Germany in particular. Public opinion, however, and many minor officials were inclined to judge matters in a far more arbitrary way, especially in countries which had undergone great suffering during hostilities.

Although the Committee was not required to give a considered opinion on the question, it was nevertheless obliged to take it into account, and had to use circumspection when

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 539 et seq.

acting as neutral intermediary and when exercising its right of initiative. Since its only concern is to give the most effective help to those in need, the ICRC chooses in each particular case the most appropriate means to that end. That is why it did not, for instance, think it useful to make a public appeal for contributions in behalf of prisoners from Axis countries after the end of hostilities.

The ICRC was undoubtedly bound to act in the interest of the defeated, and its efforts from the end of 1945 were in fact centred on their welfare. In spite of appearances, no partisanship was involved in this policy, since the work of the Committee during any given conflict has to be considered as a whole. A rapid survey of the second World War and ensuing events will show that, from 1939 to 1943, considerable moral and material relief was given almost exclusively to nationals of the United Nations. In 1944 and part of 1945 the balance was still in their favour, and only in the post-war period was the position entirely reversed; then the intervention of the ICRC was only required for the combatants of defeated countries. The Western Powers, moreover, who had until then abundantly benefited by the Committee's assistance, readily authorized and in fact facilitated its activities, although circumstances made it impossible for these Powers to grant PW treatment strictly in accordance with the Red Cross Conventions and humanitarian principles.

The ICRC therefore met with few difficulties of a diplomatic or administrative nature. As regards material relief, however, the extremely limited means at its disposal hampered its efforts. From 1945 to 1947, the only resources available were : (1) for German PW, the balance remaining from sums subscribed by the German Red Cross and the German Government ; (2) for German and Austrian PW, the proceeds of collections taken in the United States amongst German PW who were still in relatively comfortable circumstances. For Italian PW, matters were slightly less difficult.

The ensuing account will deal mainly with relief to German PW, since they formed a typical example of the problems which affect material assistance to defeated combatants.

The collections mentioned above had been organized during 1944 by the German PW themselves in some of the camps in the United States ; the proceeds had been handed to the delegation of the ICRC in Washington, which kept them as funds for special grants, when required. Other camps followed suit, and funds amounting to \$ 1,220 at the end of 1944 had reached over \$ 12,000 by April 1945. Shortly afterwards, contributions from the German authorities and German Red Cross ceased altogether, and the ICRC requested their delegation to keep the above funds in reserve for general relief to German PW, and to encourage further collections. Gifts then arrived from all camps, raising the relief fund to \$ 200,000 in August 1945, to \$ 759,000 at the end of the year and to \$ 1,900,834 in June 1946, at which date the remaining German and Austrian PW left the United States.

The American authorities permitted these collections only on condition that the donors should not set any limitation to the use of the funds obtained, and that the ICRC should be entirely free to employ the money without distinction of nationality, race or religion. The camp leaders were, however, allowed to inform the ICRC delegation of the men's wishes ; many camps were more particularly interested in victims of the concentration camps, others in the German and Austrian civilian populations, prisoners in particular need, the European children, and so forth.

In compliance with their wishes, the ICRC spent about 60% of the total amount in favour of German and Austrian PW ; the remainder was allocated for relief to civilians and for the constitution of a reserve fund of \$ 500,000, to serve for the return of " Surplus Kit ", of which more will be said later. However, this reserve was not used as arranged, and \$ 250,000 were released in the autumn of 1946 for the purchase of relief supplies for German prisoners.

It must be stressed that these funds were absurdly small, as the following comparison will show.

The value of relief consignments to German prisoners of war from the summer of 1945 to that of 1947 only amounted to about 19 million Swiss francs, i.e. the approximate cost of

ten days' relief supplies to Allied PW, to whom relief supplies amounting in all to some *three thousand million* francs were assigned. Further, at the beginning of the post-war period, the number of Austrian, German, Hungarian, Japanese and other prisoners greatly exceeded the maximum Allied PW strengths, and, in 1947, the figure was still over a million men, not counting those in Russian hands. Thus, the ICRC often had to work out relief schemes at a time when the funds at their disposal did not even amount to *one franc* per head.

The methods employed naturally suffered by these restrictions. Instead of merely transmitting gifts for PW, as it had done during hostilities, the ICRC was obliged to take active steps to find donors — a task which, for the political and psychological reasons already quoted, proved thankless enough. Further, its inability to provide adequate relief from its own resources, reduced the Committee in the main to indirect assistance, such as appeals to the Detaining Powers for the treatment of PW in accordance with treaty stipulations and humanitarian principles. In the Western European countries in particular, where the release of PW was slower than overseas, war and occupation had left deep and painful wounds: ruin and destruction, impoverished economic conditions, and resentment against the invaders. The primary duty of the ICRC was to ensure that the prisoners should suffer as little as possible by these circumstances; the gradual improvement in their conditions was partly due to the Committee's efforts, and to the willing support which, it must be recorded, was increasingly afforded by the States concerned.

The Committee's resources, both in money and in kind, were too small to allow of equal distribution among the PW; priority was therefore given to those in severe climates, or in countries which were unable to give them minimum maintenance. Thus, German PW in Poland and Yugoslavia often received proportionately more than their comrades in France and North Africa, whilst intellectual matter only was provided for camps in the Near East, Australia, the United States, Great Britain, and elsewhere. Merely limiting the number of recipients did not, however, entirely solve the question; the

Committee was ultimately compelled to satisfy only the most pressing needs. It thus restricted its purchases to medicaments, small quantities of diet foods, hospital linen, underclothing, tailors' and shoemakers' materials and, whenever possible, footwear. It was considered advisable to abandon any attempt at giving food supplies; even by abandoning all other forms of relief, attempts in this field would have been insignificant. The Committee also found that, with regard to food, the Detaining Powers were able to follow up its suggestions more freely than hitherto.

From the above comments, it will be seen that the Committee's resources were very limited, especially as it was obliged to hold back a minimum reserve fund (often less than 500,000 francs) for unforeseen emergencies, such as epidemics, the relief of distant camps the existence of which had remained unknown, and for repatriated prisoners.

The question of transport costs for relief supplies was also difficult to settle. As the "levy"¹ was only applicable to relief supplies for Allied PW, and the proceeds of the "levy" from the German side had ceased, these costs could only be covered by the balance of the German Government's payments for this purpose. This balance amounted to 613,097.52 francs on January 1, 1946, and fell to 443,088.22 francs by June 30, 1947. As the ICRC was anxious to keep this balance in hand against possible deficits, it was obliged to deduct from funds intended for the purchase of relief supplies a percentage sufficient to cover overhead costs, such as administrative expenses at Geneva and in the delegations (when accountable to relief activities), warehousing, checking of consignments, repacking, loading and transport charges, if free transport was refused. During 1946, a reserve account was instituted, whereby 20% of all funds subscribed for any given relief action were put aside to meet costs, and any remaining balance was afterwards transferred to the purchase fund.

The question remained whether these deductions were justifiable, since the funds had been subscribed exclusively

¹ See page 270.

for prisoners' needs. Some donors, it is true, relieved the ICRC of any anxiety on this point. The Committee had, in view of the humanitarian character of its work, received from the Swiss pharmaceutical manufacturers during the war a rebate of 30% on the wholesale rates for its purchases. From July 1, 1946, half this rebate, which until then had been entirely used for prisoners' needs, was placed in the reserve account. Added to the balance of the German subscriptions already mentioned, these funds were, with the donors' permission, used to meet overhead deficits. These could no longer be paid by the levy made on the reserve account, i.e. 2% in 1946, and 5% in 1947. Whereas during the war an average levy of less than 5 per thousand had been sufficient when the goods handled amounted to about 2 million francs a day, overhead expenses inevitably exceeded this low rate when the figure reached only 2 million per quarter, in spite of reductions in staff and administrative machinery. As the donors would not have approved of a deduction of more than 5 per cent (which was the limit set by the ICRC in 1947), recourse had to be made to the two reserve accounts mentioned above.

Even then the ICRC was faced with financial difficulties, and at the beginning of 1947, it considered whether the purchase, packing and despatch of relief supplies could not be more economically undertaken by commercial agents, despite the remuneration such agents would require for their services. Self-management was however found less expensive, as the rebates which the suppliers, especially in Switzerland, granted the ICRC, would not have been available to third parties. No change in working methods was made during the first half of 1947; during the period July 1947-June 1948, a new but partial solution was found¹.

During the war, the ICRC received a great many donations in kind, and purchases were relatively few. Furthermore, these were made on the Swiss market, where prices were state-controlled. After the war, however, the ICRC was obliged to

¹ See Report on the Committee's activities from July 1, 1947 to December 31, 1948.

draw upon its main assets to purchase goods, in some cases job lots of uncertain value. The Committee was, moreover, not responsible to any donors for its transactions, the funds at its disposal having been contributed by German PW in the United States, or drawn from frozen funds in Switzerland belonging to the former German Government. It was then decided that the relief schemes should not be the sole concern of the Relief Department, or of the Pharmaceutical Section, and considered by the Central Management only, but that they should be further submitted for the approval of the President's office.

Further, as from the end of 1946, commercial experts outside the ICRC and its management were appointed to supervise the purchase prices of commodities.

However judiciously employed, the above resources proved insufficient. The ICRC therefore tried to fill the deficiency by facilitating the despatch of family parcels and organising collections among members of German communities overseas.

Family parcels, which were the original form of Red Cross relief, played an important part during the War¹, especially in respect of French PW in Germany. The moral support they gave was not their least advantage. When hostilities ceased and the majority of the detaining States were quite unable to supply prisoners with the minimum rations laid down by the Conventions, the material and moral value of these parcels increased accordingly. It remained to be seen whether the next of kin could make the sacrifice involved, and whether they should be encouraged to do so by the ICRC, which was itself supplying relief to the German and Australian civilian populations, at first through the Joint Relief Commission and after the end of 1946, in conjunction with the League of Red Cross Societies, through the International Relief Centre for Civilian Populations, the International Union for Child Welfare, and other welfare associations. After careful study, the ICRC undertook this responsibility. The Committee was the prisoners' only support, while the civilian populations, however bad circumstances might be, were assisted by the occupying

¹ See pp. 10 et seq.

authorities and received gifts through various channels from abroad. Nevertheless, the occupation headquarters in various areas did occasionally limit the contents or number of parcels sent, but the goodwill of the authorities in yielding to the Committee's arguments led to an early compromise, covering the interests of the occupying authorities, the population, and the prisoners and their families.

As early as 1946, the ICRC launched an appeal to German communities abroad, as there remained no German Government or National Red Cross to whom it could apply. In particular, it made an application to the Swiss authorities to sanction the use in favour of German PW, of private German funds impounded in Switzerland, within the limits of the agreements concluded between the chief Allied Powers and Switzerland. The ICRC also asked that certain sums deposited by the German Government, before the surrender, with the Swiss Government or the German Legation in Berne, should be released, at least partially, for the benefit of German PW in Germany.

In spite of the funds raised in this manner in 1946 and early in 1947, the situation remained alarming. Although food rations were on an average slightly higher than in the preceding year, the prisoners were underfed, especially where their state of health required a stimulant diet. They lacked medical attention and clothing; when released and repatriated, they were exposed to hardships which were particularly severe for the sick and disabled.

The ICRC once again urged the Detaining Powers to improve prisoners' conditions and to hasten their repatriation. At the same time, the study of the reports on camp visits led the ICRC to conclude that to meet the most urgent needs would require at least the following amounts:

\$ 650,000	. . . . .	for artificial limbs
\$ 1,650,000	. . . . .	„ medical supplies
\$ 785,000	. . . . .	„ foodstuffs
\$ 36,600,000	. . . . .	„ clothing
\$ 5,950,000	. . . . .	„ sundry articles
\$ 250,000	. . . . .	„ intellectual relief (books, games, etc.).

The total requirements therefore amounted to \$ 45,885,000. This was by no means an excessive figure, as it hardly reached an average of \$ 45 per head, the number of prisoners being then at least a million, without including the repatriates and the disabled.

In February 1947, the ICRC issued an appeal to the Governments and Red Cross Societies of 34 countries, which was accompanied by a report on "The situation of German and Austrian Prisoners and War-disabled". The appeal requested Governments to allow the use of frozen German funds, and the collection and despatch of gifts in money and in kind. The National Red Cross Societies were requested to support and cooperate in these collections. The ICRC also sent representatives on special missions to the twenty countries of Latin America, to the United States, and to Spain and Portugal, to submit its appeal to the Authorities, the National Red Cross Societies and the German communities.

By June 30, 1947, twenty-six countries had responded to the appeal. All but two unfortunately declined to allow the use of frozen German funds, but all agreed to collections in their territory.

To guide persons willing to participate in this relief scheme, the ICRC issued at the end of June a leaflet entitled "Information for the use of Donors", giving a list of products and essential articles for PW and disabled, with instructions on the transfer of funds, packing and despatch of goods, and the refunding of costs.

By the end of June 1947 the ICRC had received, as a small beginning, gifts to a value of 20,000 Swiss francs ¹.

§ 2. SUPPLY OF FOOD AND CLOTHING ²

After the surrender of the German forces in May 1945, the ICRC was, as in 1940, once more suddenly faced with

¹ Further details on the subject will be found in the Report on the Activities of the ICRC from July 1, 1947, to December 31, 1948.

² For pharmaceutical relief and intellectual aid, see pp. 311-340 *passim*.

great numbers of prisoners in need of relief. Some were given the status of "Disarmed Personnel" but this had no bearing on the problem they set. At that time there were, including "Disarmed Personnel", well over three million German PW, of whom almost one million were held in France, about one million in Italy, 80,000 to 100,000 in Yugoslavia, 40,000 to 50,000 in Poland, about 20,000 in Czechoslovakia, a few hundred thousand in the British Commonwealth and the United States, and almost one million in Germany itself. The number held in Russia was not known.

The physical and moral condition of the prisoners was deplorable. A great number had been under arms for several years, and their health had been affected by the campaigns in Eastern Europe or in Africa; all were profoundly depressed by the total ruin of their country. A large proportion consisted of boys of 15 to 19, and men in the fifties or sixties.

Relief was therefore a matter of great urgency, and only the ICRC could supply it. The only resources available, however, were a sum of barely 700,000 Swiss francs, representing the balance of the funds contributed by the former German Government, and about 400 tons of supplies, comprising the last two deliveries of food supplies from the German Red Cross, intended for German prisoners in North Africa, which had not been forwarded for technical reasons. In addition, the shortage of transport prevented any immediate action; accordingly, nothing could be done before 1946 for the German PW in Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was in fact, some months before the ICRC, or even the Governments of the Detaining Powers could ascertain the exact number of PW, their postal addresses and the route by rail or road which served each camp. In Poland, for instance, transport was disorganized for so long, that in 1946 there were still prisoners in some provinces of whom the central authorities in Warsaw knew nothing.

The ICRC had from the beginning to relate its relief work to the limited resources at its disposal, and it decided on measures based on the three following principles:

(1) — No response would be made to requests for individual relief, except those from men who were isolated or in prison.

It was to be presumed that all prisoners in the same camp fared in much the same way, and that those who made application were not necessarily the worst off, but rather the more enterprising, who did not hesitate to write to the ICRC and at the same time to other relief organizations such as the YMCA, the Society of Friends and the American Red Cross. Moreover, the system of collective relief was more convenient and effective ; it would obviously have been both costly and difficult to despatch parcels to prisoners on farms or in labour detachments far from any railway. It was better to send full wagon-loads of provisions to base camps, for the men's communal kitchen, or for fair distribution by the camp leader.

(2) — The ICRC did not think that it should have to look after prisoners due for early release. This applied in particular to the men in the big assembly centres in Germany itself, where they only remained for two to six months after the armistice.

(3) — Relief, as mentioned above, was also not considered necessary for prisoners held by countries in relatively satisfactory economic circumstances, such as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Great Britain, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and the United States.

The ICRC therefore, from the autumn of 1945, concentrated its efforts on relief for prisoners in French hands, numbering about a million. By this time, rail communications had been almost entirely restored, and the military authorities, having completed the organization of depots and labour detachments, were anxious for the ICRC to share with them the task of feeding and clothing the men who were being used as labour throughout France. It was also agreed that the ICRC might freely visit the camps, and that the distribution of relief supplies should be carried out by them, or under their supervision.

In spite of having limited its efforts to this one category of PW, the ICRC still found itself without sufficient resources to meet their full needs for any length of time. In agreement with its Delegation in Paris, it therefore decided to send relief in the first instance to camps where the food situation was

especially critical ; thereafter, to the sick in camp infirmaries or in hospitals ; thirdly, to men who were isolated in prisons ; and finally, to the camps in North Africa and Corsica, where the food supply was still very precarious.

During the summer of 1945, the ICRC learned from its delegates' reports—and the French Government acknowledged the fact — that about 200,000 men out of one million were in serious danger from underfeeding. This was particularly so in the devastated areas, or in non-agricultural regions such as the Atlantic seaboard, Auvergne and the Bordeaux district. The number of cases of hunger oedema and general debility were increasing, and many had, or were likely to have fatal results, the daily rations having fallen to less than one thousand calories. Furthermore, the camps had been overcrowded, owing to the cession by the United States of 200,000 prisoners to France.

On August 21, the ICRC issued a Memorandum to all Governments concerned on the prisoners' condition. They declared that, in their own view, prisoners handed over to another Power should be given treatment at least equal to that applying before their transfer. On September 14, they again approached the U.S. Government, with a request that they should take urgent steps to alleviate the grievous need of German prisoners in French hands. The head of the Delegation in Paris had several interviews with the United States military authorities in Paris and Frankfort, to whom he detailed the requirements in foodstuffs, medical supplies and clothing, and offering at the same time the services of the Committee.

These negotiations led to an important relief scheme, which was later termed " Operation A " (American). This began on October 6, and when it ended, about three weeks later, the men's physical condition and morale showed marked improvement. An undertaking given by the French Government to raise the daily ration to 2,000 calories indicated that they were now out of danger.

Motor-trucks and drivers had been placed at the disposal of the ICRC by the United States authorities, and these distributed supplies from the American food depots at Marseilles,

Rheims, Orleans, Le Havre and Le Mans. Convoying and distribution were carried out by five ICRC delegates in France and 25 escort agents. Thus, 3,669,374 kilos of foodstuffs were distributed to all the camps in fourteen out of 19 military districts, and 262,485 kilos of clothing and sleeping bags went to 32 camps, containing a total of 169,099 men ¹.

These relief supplies were given free by the Americans, but the ICRC delegation was reimbursed for its expenses by PW depots at the rate of one French franc per kilo of goods delivered. The amount of these invoices was deducted from collections amongst able-bodied PW who received pay, and from the fairly large sums which the camp commandants were compelled to accumulate from "mess profits", since they could not always find sufficient supplies on the market to absorb the credits allowed them for purchases of foodstuffs.

Concurrently, a similar plan, called "Operation F" (French) was devised to supplement "Operation A". At the time when it was decided that the situation described above had to be rectified at all costs, the French Government had repatriated the great majority of French PW from Germany, and was at any rate able to estimate the exact amount of supplies still necessary for the repatriation centres. A large stock of food parcels, made up after the liberation of France by the provincial branches of the French Red Cross, still remained in Switzerland, and could not be forwarded to Germany owing to the breakdown in rail transport. At the suggestion of the ICRC, part of these stocks were bought with the proceeds of collections among prisoners and "mess profits". The parcels were sorted and made up by the ICRC, which began to dispatch them in the autumn of 1945. The prisoners thus received about 200 tons more of foodstuffs.

In addition to these supplies, the remainder of the German Red Cross stocks warehoused in Switzerland was brought into use. During the autumn of 1945, the ICRC also distributed to German prisoners in France and North Africa various food

¹ The details of this distribution were as follows :— 85,555 sleeping bags, 18,030 pairs of shoes, 19,080 tunics, 700 vests, 18,330 greatcoats, 17,745 pairs of trousers, and 11,774 caps.

supplies bought in Sweden with funds available at Geneva ; these purchases consisted of 100 tons of powdered milk, 100 tons of split peas and 15,000 tins of preserved fish.

German prisoners in France suffered from the lack of clothing no less than from under-nourishment. This need was partially met with the help of collections made in German PW camps in the United States. The Relief Division was thus able to buy, at a cost of \$ 175,000, 197,000 pairs of shoes from American " surplus stores ", that is to say, the reserve stocks which the U.S. Government had built up in France, and which were sold off after the war. Of this footwear, 157,000 pairs were distributed in France, 15,000 in North Africa, and at a later date, 25,000 in Poland and Jugoslavia. Furthermore, the Delegation of the ICRC in Washington purchased, at a cost of \$ 160,000, 72,000 U.S. Army sleeping bags, which were divided among the camps in France, Jugoslavia and Poland. The delegation in France also issued 25,432 articles of underclothing from American surplus stocks.

The ICRC took further measures to procure clothing for PW during the winter of 1945-1946. Assuming that in the comparatively less devastated regions of Germany there would be a considerable number of uniforms belonging to dead, captured or demobilized service men, the Committee requested the occupying Powers to allow them to collect old German army uniforms and other clothing for the prisoners' use. The proposal was accepted only by the French Government, for whom it presented obvious advantages. In November 1945, the collection was organized in the French Zone of occupation, with the help of local welfare organizations, and brought in about 875 tons of clothing, of which 800 were at once despatched to camps in France. The remaining 75 tons were cleaned and disinfected in the Committee's warehouses at Geneva, and then sent on to France and Poland. This was certainly a most satisfactory result.

The prisoners condition again became alarming in the summer of 1946, as the " carry-over " between the French harvests had not been sustained. The Swiss Relief Fund had at that time made a collection of potatoes among Swiss farmers for distribution in neighbouring countries, and having obtained

more than the quantity required, it handed over the surplus of 67 tons to the ICRC, which sent them to PW hospitals and to camps where food conditions were especially bad.

At the same time, the ICRC Delegation in Paris, encouraged by the success of "Operation F", established a "Paid Relief" service, with the approval of the French authorities, in order to provide prisoners with a more varied and substantial diet. It offered to purchase in France, at the request and the charge of camps and labour detachments, especially nutritious foodstuffs, such as date, fig and banana butter, jams, honey, flour made from runner beans, haricot beans, peas, barley and chestnuts, meal for soups, oatflakes, and so on, but no rationed products. Thus, from September 1946 to June 1947, it bought and sold 308 tons of goods at a cost of 20,400,000 French francs and sent off 500 consignments to 76 depots, 18 military hospitals and many labour detachments. The scheme was carried on over the whole period with a working capital of five million French francs, and without any loss of goods.

The Relief Division also undertook important transactions, firstly in 1946, and again during the first half of 1947, to a total value of 282,536 and 481,488 Swiss francs respectively. It was thus able to send foodstuffs to France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (in particular 9,100 tins of sardines which it was able to buy cheaply), as well as underclothing, material for cobblers' and tailors' repairs, and toilet articles.

Gifts in kind were few. From May 1945 to June 1947, the ICRC received 118 tons of such goods, comprising 94 tons of foodstuffs, 14 tons of clothing and ten tons of cigarettes and sundry articles. Nearly all the donors lived in Switzerland: the few residing abroad sent their gifts direct to the ICRC delegations, except for the German Women's Committee in Buenos Ayres, which forwarded some of the gifts to Geneva.

Lastly, a few private collections were organized in Switzerland under the auspices of the ICRC; one of these was in behalf of German Red Cross sisters held in captivity. The results were in general satisfactory.

German prisoners in North Africa received relief through the ICRC Delegation in Cairo. The head of that delegation

visited South Africa and was fortunate enough to obtain from the South African Red Cross and other relief organizations the gift of several shipments of foodstuffs, as well as funds with which goods were purchased in Egypt. The delegation also received gifts from local sources, and from the German civilian internees in Palestine and Southern Rhodesia. These amounted in all to 258 tons of foodstuffs, including 88 tons abandoned by the German forces on the Island of Rhodes, which the British authorities, in the spring of 1946, handed over for German PW. These commodities (maize, barley, meal, dried peas, tinned meat and lard) were all sent to North Africa, excepting 18 cases containing 645 kilos of lard ; 15 cases were forwarded to Poland and three to Czechoslovakia.

All consignments were sent, not direct to the camps as during the war, but to the ICRC delegations, to ensure the judicious use of the supplies, which were too limited in quantity for general distribution. The delegates in France were helped in their work by PW placed at their service by the military authorities.

As already mentioned, individual relief was given only to men detained in French prisons for various reasons ; these were supplied with standard parcels, made up by the delegation in Paris and containing goods received from Geneva. In 1946, the parcels held 1 tin of jam, 2 tins of biscuits, 250 grammes of chocolate, 5 cakes of soap, 1 pair of socks and some underclothing. Prisoners who received pay gave 100 French francs for each parcel, whilst others received them free of charge.

The ICRC, for the reasons described above, had some difficulty in arranging for prisoners to receive parcels from Germany and Austria. Through the efforts of its delegates in the British, American and French zones in Germany, the relatives of PW in French hands were, in 1945, allowed to send Christmas parcels. These were officially authorized in 1946 and accepted by all German post-offices, except in the Russian zone. There were many losses at first, but a normal service was finally established.

It was a far more difficult matter to secure the same advantages for PW in the countries of Eastern Europe. It was not until the end of 1946 that the ICRC delegations in Germany,

Austria and Yugoslavia obtained the consent of all the authorities concerned to the despatch of family parcels by block-trains for PW in Yugoslavia. The first train, composed of nine wagons from the American zone in Germany and six wagons from Austria, left Salzburg on November 2, 1946 and crossed the Yugoslav frontier on the following day. The contents were distributed by the Yugoslav Red Cross; shortly afterwards the Committee was informed that the parcels had arrived in the camps. The same year, two other block-trains left Salzburg with loads not only from the American zone and from Austria, but also from the French zone. A few months before, the Austrian post-offices had been authorized to accept postal packages in transit for prisoners in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, the Committee's delegations in Germany obtained authority to organize, with the local Red Cross branches, the despatch of individual parcels to Poland and Yugoslavia by block-trains sent direct from Germany.

§ 3. FORWARDING OF SURPLUS KIT

The " Surplus Kit Operation ", set on foot by the Delegation in Washington, remains to be described. As far back as 1944, when the repatriation of Italian PW was under discussion, it had been assumed that prisoners held in the United States would not be able to take all their personal effects with them when they returned to Europe. At the suggestion of the Delegation, the Secretary for War gave it authority to collect all such excess luggage for despatch to Geneva at the end of hostilities, when it could be sent on to the prisoners' country of origin. There were three categories of articles :

(1) — Works of art, handicraft, and so on, executed by the prisoners, such as paintings, drawings, carvings, photographs, scientific collections, musical instruments, scores and manuscripts.

(2) — Books of all descriptions.

(3) — Clothing and articles bought by the prisoners out of their pay during captivity.

The Committee's Delegation in Canada obtained similar authority for prisoners in that country.

The surplus kit was forwarded from all the camps to the Committee's warehouse in New York, to await despatch to Europe. Such large quantities arrived that the Committee had to create separate departments to deal with it, both in New York and Geneva. Heavy expenses were incurred, and the Delegation in Washington, which had at first accepted the kit free, was eventually compelled to make a charge to senders. However, costs were lower than at first estimated, and in the end there remained a balance of 470,000 Swiss francs which, with the consent of the *Landesverbände* of the German Red Cross, was allocated to the purchase of relief supplies for German prisoners.

When the last prisoners left the United States in June 1946, the surplus kit in the care of the ICRC amounted to about 180,000 parcels. These parcels weighed in all 2,000 tons and their transport at the ordinary rates would have entailed sums that neither the Committee, nor the owners could have borne. The American authorities were good enough to allow free carriage. The first shipments arrived at Marseilles and Le Havre on board American troopships, and were forwarded by rail, also free of cost, to the Red Cross warehouses in Geneva. When the kit could no longer be shipped in this way, the Delegation in Washington was authorized to send all parcels not exceeding 20 lbs in weight by mailbag. The remaining 1,800 tons were sent to Bremerhaven by the U.S. War Department.

After prolonged discussion, the ICRC and the Bavarian Red Cross came to an agreement, approved by the occupying authorities, on the method of forwarding kit to the owners. It was arranged that the Bavarian Red Cross should be responsible for receiving and sorting the parcels, checking addresses, tracing addressees who had changed their residence, and forwarding parcels in Germany and to former inhabitants of territories that had returned to Czechoslovakia, or were under Polish administration. The Austrian and Italian Red Cross Societies undertook the same duties in Austria and Italy. All parcels

received at Geneva or Bremerhaven were thus forwarded, according to their ultimate destination, to one or other of these organizations, by means of block-trains escorted by agents of the ICRC or of the Red Cross Societies concerned.

Chapter II

Relief to Displaced Persons

The Allies had declared beforehand that, at the end of hostilities, they would each in their respective zones of occupation, undertake the provisioning of the citizens of United Nations countries who might be in Germany. From May 1945 onwards, the ICRC therefore made every endeavour to co-operate with the Allied military authorities. The Committee had at that time over 100,000 tons of relief consignments available in its warehouses in Switzerland, in the ports of arrival and in several warehouses in Germany. Apart from some 400 tons intended for German PW in North Africa, these supplies had been given for PW in German hands and included a relatively small quantity for political detainees in the concentration camps.

These goods were intended mainly to supplement the rations issued by the occupation authorities to former PW and civilian internees in Germany pending their repatriation; this last process, however, was carried out at such speed that only a very limited proportion of goods was used in this way¹. It was therefore proposed to use them for displaced persons, citizens of United Nations countries, whose situation was extremely critical. The consent of the donors was, however, necessary, and most of these preferred to have their goods returned to them. The American and British Red Cross Societies, on the other hand, pooled all the foodstuffs and clothing sent to the ICRC, and this joint stock could be drawn upon

¹ See p. 96.

under their supervision and the instructions of the Interallied Supreme Command, and supplied to Displaced Persons of the United Nations in the American and British Zones. The French Government decided that in its own zone the same category of people should be assisted by the military authorities and by the French Red Cross, who would draw on the stocks from French sources that were in the custody of the ICRC.

In the first few months after the armistice, the Allies did not consider it necessary to appeal to the ICRC, although relief requirements were urgent and vast in scope. In the course of the early interviews in May 1945 at Kreuzlingen, near the German-Swiss frontier, attended by representatives of the Allied military authorities and of the ICRC, the Committee was informed that its co-operation was no longer considered necessary. Fully informed of the distress of the Displaced Persons, the Committee could not but persist. In July, they opened further negotiations in Augsburg and Frankfurt with the United States Army High Command and did not conceal their firm intention to pursue a task which, though temporary, was none the less urgent, and which their technical organization and their large stocks of goods would enable them to carry through with every prospect of success. The Committee pointed out, moreover, that the occupation authorities were so overburdened with work that relief transported by the ICRC to the centres specified, in particular to Augsburg and Mannheim, had not been issued. These arguments were, however, of no avail.

Immediately afterwards, the ICRC took similar steps in Paris and in London. Whilst their proposals met with sympathy, neither the French Ministry for Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees, nor the British War Office or the British Red Cross could give an undertaking to intervene in Frankfurt. The interviews which took place in Geneva with representatives of the American Red Cross only served to confirm the Committee's point of view in principle, without altering the paradoxical and most deplorable fact that large quantities of food and clothing remained idle in Switzerland, when they might have somewhat relieved the dire distress of the Displaced Persons.

In a Memorandum addressed, in August 1945, to the Governments and Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned, the ICRC consequently declined all responsibility for citizens of the United Nations in Germany, since the Committee was prevented from sending them the relief which it considered indispensable and which it could have supplied. The Committee further deplored the fact that it could do nothing in behalf of Displaced Persons who were nationals of countries that the Allies considered as ex-enemy States. The Occupation Authorities had informed the Committee that the maintenance of these people devolved on the German administrative departments in charge of food supplies for the civil population. These departments were, however, unable to distribute even the barest necessities to Baltic, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Hungarian, and Italian nationals or to stateless persons, owing to the shortage of foodstuffs, to requisitioning by the Allied Armies and to transport difficulties. In spite of this fact, the ICRC was not allowed to help this category of war victims by drawing on the pool. The French Government alone placed at its disposal 150,000 five-kilo food parcels for Baltic and Hungarian DPs, which were distributed between May 1945 and February 1946.

Despite all the negotiations mentioned above, the situation remained unchanged and, although appeals which increased in urgency and number reached Geneva, it was impossible to send consignments at shorter intervals. Moreover, the goods already sent to Germany and entrusted to Allied organizations which had been recommended to the ICRC, were neither guarded, nor even protected against the weather. After many incidents, a special ICRC mission again went to Frankfurt and made it plain to the Allied authorities that the longer the distribution of stocks was delayed, the greater would be the liability incurred by the Governments and Red Cross Societies who were owners of relief supplies, since this state of affairs obliged the ICRC to maintain a large administrative organisation. The Allies then decided to wind up the pool straight away, and from November 1945, sent rolling stock for this purpose to the Swiss frontier. By the end of February 1946, the last wagons had left the warehouses.

The ICRC also made every endeavour to bring relief direct to the Displaced Persons. A few donors had left it free to dispose of about a thousand tons of goods, and the Committee decided to use them for this purpose ; it was thus, during the winter of 1945-46, able to send 113 wagons of sundry goods to its delegations in Germany and Austria. During the same period, the residue of the 150,000 food parcels given by the French Government for Baltic and Hungarian DPs was dispatched, the first half of this lot having already been issued in the summer of 1945. At the request of the General Post Office in London, the Swiss Postal Administration also handed over to the ICRC about 165 tons of cigarette and tobacco parcels posted direct by relatives of British PW in Germany, and which were still in transit through Switzerland when the war came to an end. Lastly, the Committee had 250 tons of sundry relief supplies available, consisting of foodstuffs, clothing and toilet articles given by the British Red Cross. By the end of March 1946, these gifts had enabled it to send 66 wagons to DPs in Germany, and 40 wagons to those in Austria, and also seven wagons to refugees in France. Part of the tobacco and cigarette parcels mentioned above were handed over to the Belgian and French Red Cross Societies.

In behalf of Displaced Persons also, the ICRC was able to spend certain sums which, during the war, had been entrusted to them for the relief of Allied prisoners, but which had not been used by the time of the armistice. The largest of these sums was a remittance of 25,000 francs from the Afghan Red Crescent, and another of 10,000 francs from the Gambia War Charities Fund. In all, the Committee had at its disposal 120,000 Swiss francs, which it employed for the following purposes :

Food parcels for DPs of all nationalities in the French Zone of Germany.

Food parcels for Rumanian DPs in Austria.

Sundry relief supplies for Ukrainian DPs in Austria.

Oat-flakes, chocolate, condensed milk, etc., for the children of DPs of all nationalities in Austria and in the French Zone of Germany.

Candles and various Christmas presents for children of DPs in Austria.

A sum of 12,000 Swiss francs made over to the ICRC Delegation in Italy for local purchases of relief supplies.

Layettes and underwear to a value of 20,000 Swiss francs, sent to the Delegation in Paris for refugees of all nationalities in France.

Moreover, since the request of German prisoners in the United States had been that part of the collection should be devoted to DPs, some 20,000 francs were used to purchase layettes ; these were distributed in Austria and in the French Zone of Germany, where the DPs were in decidedly worse circumstances than in the British and American Zones.

Other funds were spent on DPs of specified nationalities. The Estonian Legation in New York and the Latvian Legation in Washington informed the Committee's delegate in Washington, of their desire to hand over to the ICRC, for the benefit of Estonian and Latvian refugees in Europe, part of their Governments' funds frozen in the United States. The Committee agreed to these mandates, once convinced that its action as a neutral intermediary was required. It had in fact learned that the United States Treasury would release these funds only on condition that they were entrusted to itself, and moreover, that the authorities of the United States Zone of Occupation were in favour of this plan. Two sums, one of 200,000 and one of 85,000 dollars were then transferred to the ICRC, the first for Estonian and the second for Latvian refugees ; these allowed the despatch of clothing materials, layettes, cobblers' and tailors' material, toilet articles, medicaments and so on, to Germany and Austria. Further, relief organizations in the United States and Canada made a gift of 11,000 dollars for the purchase of foodstuffs for Ukrainian refugees in Austria.

Finally, the ICRC had available, in 1946 and 1947, a few gifts in kind for its relief work in general and for certain categories of war victims. The first were allotted to Displaced Persons. Thus, following an appeal launched jointly by the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Union for Child Welfare, the Committee received some fifteen

tons of dried fruits from the Turkish Red Crescent, cases of clothing from the Chilian Red Cross, 20 tons of sundry relief supplies from the Brazilian Red Cross and two and a half tons of milk powder from the Uruguayan Red Cross. These gifts were despatched to Austria, except the milk powder which went to children of DPs in the French Zone of Germany. The ICRC also received the following relief supplies for Displaced Persons of specified categories: for Ukrainians, some 54 tons of medicaments, foodstuffs, worn clothing and school equipment, provided by the Ukrainian Canadian Relief Fund in Canada; for Jugoslavs in Austria, some five tons of warm clothing from the Serbian Relief Committee of America in the United States, together with small quantities of relief supplies sent by Jugoslav groups in Great Britain.

Among refugees of special concern to the Committee were the Spanish Republicans. The Committee allotted to them a large part of the relief goods sent to the delegation in Paris for refugees in France. Moreover, the war-disabled at Fouka Marine, in Algeria, received about a ton of underwear, toilet articles and medicaments.

Although of considerable extent during the winter of 1945-46, relief work in behalf of Displaced Persons diminished after that period, and was confined to carrying out specified commissions. In the autumn of 1946, the ICRC decided to wind up this work as of November 1—with the exception of such commissions as were still in progress—since it was not in a position to act on a sufficiently large scale; moreover, its financial means made it barely possible for it to carry out its main task of giving aid to PW. During 1947, the ICRC received no further appeals for the relief of Displaced Persons, so that this decision was not prejudicial to these victims of the war.

PART II

WORK OF THE ICRC IN TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS ¹

GENERAL REMARKS

The measures taken by belligerents during the second World War to isolate the enemy, paralyse his communications and destroy his means of transport, seriously hampered the application of numerous provisions of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

In June 1940, after the invasion of France and Italy's entry into the War, there remained only one serviceable line of communication between the British Commonwealth and the Continent — that through Portugal and Spain. Contact between Great Britain and Sweden was broken when Denmark and Norway were occupied; Switzerland, surrounded on all sides by Axis Powers, was also cut off from direct contact with the Commonwealth. Before the belligerents had reached agreement on the Committee's suggestions for the restoration of communications², the situation was aggravated by the Spanish authorities' decision, early in December 1940, to prohibit the transit of goods through Spain. The events which followed — occupation of the Balkans, invasion of Russia, entry into the war of the United States, landings in North Africa, war in the Pacific, Allied landings in France — everywhere raised impassable barriers, and the destruction of merchant vessels and the

¹ As several National Red Cross Societies have expressed a wish to receive full information regarding the ICRC organization of maritime transports and the difficulties with which they had to contend, a more detailed explanation has been given under this heading than for other subjects.

² See pp. 130 et seq.

bombing of railroads brought sea and land transport almost to a standstill. From August 1944, all communication between territories in German hands and elsewhere had been cut, and only the ICRC ships, motor vehicles and "block-trains"¹, together with the Swedish vessels chartered for relief to Greece, were still able to maintain between belligerent camps the contacts required for the conveyance of mail and relief supplies to the prisoners of war. When Japan became at war with the USSR in 1945, she was also cut off from other countries.

This state of affairs raised problems affecting most countries. Relief organizations and Governments all met the same difficulties in getting relief supplies to their nationals or to persons under their protection, and in forwarding correspondence. In the circumstances, special agreements between States could only be of partial assistance. On the other hand, the especial status of the ICRC enabled it to devise more general plans, and to take practical measures in favour of all war victims, irrespective of nationality.

The lack of communications was an obstacle to the repatriation, under the Conventions, of medical personnel and the seriously wounded and sick, and similarly to the forwarding of relief supplies, parcels and mail for prisoners of war. It also prevented the execution of special agreements on the exchange of civilian internees, the transmission of civilian messages and relief to civil populations. The ICRC was thus faced with new and unforeseen tasks.

Less than a year after the outbreak of war, the British Red Cross had been obliged to charter vessels to carry relief supplies and parcels. The ICRC, on its part, had to ensure the regular transmission of mail from the Central Agency, where all information concerning PW and civilian internees was assembled, and the forwarding of Red Cross Messages. The Committee made every effort to remain in contact with its delegations, especially by wireless. In August 1944, when postal services broke down completely, it arranged for the conveyance of PW correspondence, organized relief transports by sea, road

¹ Or "set-trains".

and rail, and attempted to establish communications by air.

The Committee at once sought material assistance, as its limited funds did not allow it to assume such heavy liabilities. As soon as means of transport and funds were available, it put its plans into execution. These were not, however, exclusively a matter of organization. Diplomatic problems grew in number, and effective action in that field by the ICRC depended on the consent of the belligerents, since the contacts which had to be made required special privileges and immunities, and the grant of free passage.

These critical and delicate negotiations led the Committee to set up in 1942 a separate department, the Transport and Communications Division, with an expert and technical staff, experienced in postal, wireless and telegraphic communications, and in maritime, road and rail transport. This Division had to cope with the difficulties which the constantly changing war situation threw up ; it had to organize transport and obtain the necessary permits from Governments. As some of the vessels employed for sea transport were to become the property of the ICRC, the Committee in 1942 set up the " Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports " as a separate body, with a distinct legal status, and thus entitled to own ships.

In some cases these transports were operated for the Committee by private concerns. These possessed technical facilities, the improvisation of which would have raised insuperable financial and practical difficulties and would in any case have served only a temporary need.

During the recent War, the Committee was therefore obliged to adapt its methods to an entirely novel situation. It did not shrink from heavy responsibilities, and so ensured the survival of certain humanitarian principles, despite the breakdown of normal communications and transport restrictions. The results obtained are set out in the statistics annexed hereto¹. The difficulties of the undertaking and its significance in the field of international law may be estimated in the following chapters, which describe the diplomatic negotiations and the various measures taken to ensure Red Cross transports.

¹ See volume " Annexes ".

Chapter I

Maritime Transports

§ I. INTRODUCTION

I. *Earlier schemes.*

In 1940, when the ICRC first proposed to use vessels under special charter, to fill the gaps in normal communications, it could quote no precedents or treaty stipulations in support of its scheme. The International Red Cross Conferences and a Commission of Naval Experts¹ had already studied the conditions under which protection could be granted to Red Cross maritime transports not covered by the Tenth Hague Convention². Nothing, however, was achieved, as none of the proposed systems was approved. These suggestions may, however, be compared with the methods adopted during the last conflict.

The International Fleet. — The proposal made in 1913 to create an International Red Cross fleet, contained in a report submitted by the ICRC to the XIVth International Red Cross Conference in 1930³, was also raised at the Commission of Naval Experts which sat in Geneva in 1937⁴. Although the scheme was strictly confined to aiding wounded, sick and shipwrecked persons, it satisfactorily covered the whole problem of sea transport for humanitarian purposes. Unfortunately, legal, practical

¹ Commission held at Geneva in 1937 to study the revision of the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907.

² Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention of July, 6, 1906.

³ See Document No 14 submitted to that Conference by the ICRC.

⁴ See ICRC Report to the XVIth International Red Cross Conference (1938), Document No 2.

and financial obstacles caused the scheme to be abandoned ; it could not, therefore, serve as the basis on which to build a case for granting immunity to vessels carrying Red Cross relief supplies. On the other hand, there was no question of devising special legislation, or of exempting the vessels and crews from territorial jurisdiction. In consequence, vessels bearing the Red Cross emblem and sailing under the Committee's control remained subject to the laws of the country under whose flag they voyaged, and to maritime law : any immunities enjoyed were those granted by the belligerents.

The following peculiar case was reported by the ICRC delegate in Ankara. A relief mission to the Dodecanese Islands, then occupied by German forces, had set out on February 12, 1945 ; the mission sailed on board Turkish caiques flying their national flag and the Red Cross emblem. On February 23, when Turkey declared war on Germany, the Turkish flag was hauled down and from that time the vessels only displayed the Red Cross flag. None the less they continued to sail in Greek waters with the belligerents' approval, and were universally considered by the military authorities as owned by the ICRC. The ships' charter papers held by the Turkish skippers had been drawn up in the name of the ICRC, and the delegate in charge of the mission was considered as the head of the Red Cross fleet. This incident was, as it were, the first practical realisation of the scheme for the international Red Cross fleet, although, of course, the legal problem involved had not yet been settled¹.

Transport of Medical Stores. — The protection of medical stores transported by sea had been studied before the War, in particular by the Commission of Naval Experts (1937). No provisions to this effect were, however, included in the draft of the revised Maritime Convention, as the Commission preferred to recommend to the Governments the suggestions put forward "as suitable subjects of *ad hoc* agreements"²

¹ The fact that the caiques were considered to be the property of the ICRC did not confer upon them *ipso facto* this body's nationality. See p. 154.

² See Document No 2 submitted by the ICRC to the XVth International Red Cross Conference (1938).

In September 1943, the British Red Cross informed the Committee that it proposed to charter a neutral vessel for the conveyance of medical stores from Great Britain to the British military bases in the Mediterranean, for the wounded and sick of all belligerents irrespective of nationality. The wish was expressed that this transport operation should be carried out under the emblem and the supervision of the ICRC.

Medical stores carried in vessels other than hospital ships enjoy no special protection. The Committee could not, on the other hand, use the vessels in its service to convey medical stores, because these ships had to be exclusively reserved for the tasks that the belligerents had agreed to cover by the grant of safe-conducts. The ICRC therefore submitted the proposal of the British Red Cross to the belligerent Governments concerned. The United States Government raised no objection of principle, but asked for detailed schedules for each voyage. No other replies were received.

During the recent War, the paradoxical situation therefore existed in which the facilities that were granted for relief consignments to PW, civilian internees, and even in some cases to civil populations, could not be obtained for the transport of medical stores for wounded and sick military personnel.

Relief to Civil Populations. — In the field of relief activities for civil populations, there had been recognition, before the War, of need for protection of vessels carrying supplies intended for charitable purposes. To that end, the Committee submitted the following question to the Commission of Naval Experts (1937).

“ Does the Commission believe it desirable and possible to stipulate that vessels protected by the Red Cross may be used to convey relief supplies to certain categories of the civil population, or does it consider that this protection can only be given under *ad hoc* agreements ? ”

The Commission, seconded by the National Red Cross Societies, were in favour of the latter alternative.

During the War, however, the ICRC succeeded in getting agreement that the status granted to its vessels should, in principle, be extended to cover the transport of relief supplies for certain civil populations ¹.

2. First attempt to commission ICRC vessels.

In June 1940, the ICRC made its first attempt to establish lines of communication by sea. At that time, military operations had led to an almost complete break-down of regular communications and, as already stated, Red Cross activities were seriously imperilled. The ICRC thereupon proposed to the British and German authorities that it should purchase or charter a neutral vessel to ply, under the Red Cross emblem, between Great Britain and occupied France, and that these Governments should each make good half the costs.

The German Government stated that it was prepared itself to supply a hospital ship or other vessel, and that it would find half the running costs.

The British Government gave preference to a vessel chartered by the ICRC and stipulated the conditions under which it should be put into service.

Four months after transmitting the British proposal, the Committee was informed, through the United States Government acting as Protecting Power, that the German Government declined to agree, on the grounds that navigation between British and French ports in the Channel was too insecure. The British authorities replied that they were preparing a new proposal.

Matters had thus reached a deadlock when, in February 1941, the Committee was advised by the Swedish Legation that the Swedish Red Cross was prepared to arrange for an exchange of seriously wounded across the North Sea, if the Swedish Government secured the agreement of both Germany and Great Britain. The Committee informed the Swedish Legation of its efforts during the previous eight months, and offered to support the Swedish proposal to the two countries concerned.

¹ See p. pp. 132-133.

During the second half of 1940, members of the ICRC visited London and Berlin to discuss the matter with the authorities concerned, and a delegate was sent to Lisbon to study the technical side of the question.

In the meantime, the belligerents had agreed to allow the transport in the Mediterranean of PW parcels which had been held up at Lisbon owing to the suspension of rail transit through Spain¹. This maritime service was confined to the carriage of relief supplies for PW, whereas the scheme for a cross-Channel service had been planned on a wider basis. Its acceptance would have allowed the institution from the outset of the war of a service similar to that for conveying relief supplies to PW, and the exchange of repatriates could thus have been systematically organized under Red Cross auspices.

This failure was not due to objections to the principle of the scheme, and the question even of the route was of secondary importance, since the two parties had successively proposed communication between enemy ports (Great Britain — Occupied France), and between neutral ports (Ireland—Peninsula). It was however found impossible to reach agreement on the exchange of civilian internees, the repatriation of seriously wounded and medical personnel and the other charitable operations which the use of a Red Cross vessel was to have facilitated. Furthermore, the Governments made their decision depend on the settlement of other problems, some of which were handled by the Committee and others by the Protecting Power, and even, in some cases, by both agencies at the same time. This duplication was bound to be prejudicial to the work of the Committee, particularly when proposals submitted through the Protecting Power were accompanied by threats of reprisals. Lastly, the belligerents were usually inclined to regard these questions as being interdependent; for instance, the ICRC was confidentially informed that the German authorities would only accept the British offer, provided the mail service for German PW in Canada was improved.

¹ See pp. 158 et seq.

Nevertheless, the ICRC did not relax its efforts to secure protection for vessels other than those exclusively employed for carrying PW relief supplies.

3. *Red Cross Maritime Transport during the War.*

Use of the Distinctive Emblem. — During the recent war, the Red Cross emblem began to be used to protect certain maritime transport operations which served the purposes of the Red Cross, but were not covered by international conventions

The use of a red cross on a white ground, provided for by the Geneva Convention, is strictly reserved at sea for the protection of military hospital ships. The Tenth Hague Convention of 1907 governs the employment of these vessels, which may not be put to other uses without the consent of the belligerent Powers concerned. This held good when Red Cross organizations or belligerent Governments wished to place particular transports under the Red Cross emblem. In principle, the formal agreement of all States signatory to these Conventions was necessary before the Geneva Cross could be placed on the vessels which, in circumstances not covered by the terms of the Tenth Hague Convention, actually did sail under the protection of that emblem. Since no such agreement could be secured in the midst of war, and as circumstances called for immediate action, recourse was had in each case to an arrangement between the belligerent Powers whose armed forces were liable to encounter the vessels requiring protection at a given time and on certain defined routes.

Employment of protected vessels. — The Red Cross emblem was used during the war to protect certain vessels, as follows :

(1) Cargo ships carrying, under Red Cross auspices, relief supplies intended for PW, civilian internees and some civil populations, and conveying PW mail and Red Cross message forms ;

(2) Swedish vessels carrying relief supplies to Greece ;

(3) Vessels used for the repatriation of seriously wounded and sick, and for the exchange of PW and civilian internees.

Although many vessels were put into service under the Red Cross emblem, this practice was limited to strictly defined cases, and could not be extended to all the maritime transports that were required in the execution of relief undertakings.

The belligerents were only requested to grant special protection when conveyance by ordinary vessels appeared impracticable owing to the suspension of services, or when such transports were exposed to great risks. The repatriation of seriously wounded and the exchange of civil internees were carried out partly by ordinary vessels, partly by hospital ships and by steamers sailing under special safe-conducts. In regard to the transport of goods, the parcels and relief supplies intended for Axis PW and civil internees were almost invariably sent by ordinary means. Large quantities of parcels and relief supplies for Allied PW and civil internees in Europe were also carried by neutral or belligerent vessels which did not bear the Red Cross emblem. In the course of the war, Swiss vessels, for instance, shipped about 124,000 tons of Red Cross relief supplies, whilst the Committee's vessels carried about 470,000 tons.

The particular status of these vessels did not, therefore, cover all the uses for which they were intended. Furthermore, they were limited to purposes and to routes which were clearly defined beforehand.

Vessels of the Red Cross Fleet. — Apart from hospital ships exceptionally employed for exchanging seriously wounded, PW and civil internees, most of the vessels sailing under Red Cross protection were commissioned under charter-parties between neutral shipowners and National Red Cross Societies. Three vessels, however, the *Caritas I*, *Caritas II* and *Henry Dunant* were acquired by a Red Cross body set up for this purpose by the ICRC, and styled the "Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports".

§ 2. STATUS OF THE COMMITTEE'S VESSELS

The vessels were distinguished legally by the privilege of immunities granted to them by the belligerent Powers concerned. Apart from these immunities, they continued to be subject to the common law governing neutral merchant shipping.

The main conditions which the ICRC placed to the operation of vessels under its emblem and control were as follows :

(1) The safe-conducts required for each vessel to be obtained by the ICRC.

(2) Vessels to be employed exclusively for the transport of relief supplies authorized by agreements between the ICRC and the belligerent Powers concerned, and addressed to the ICRC or their delegates.

(3) Distinctive markings to be displayed in accordance with the regulations in force.

(4) Vessels to be accompanied by neutral observers appointed by the ICRC, to ensure that the undertakings given by the ICRC to the belligerent Powers were carried out.

(5) Adherence to the schedules announced by the ICRC to the belligerent Powers, and to the sailing routes approved by the latter.

The conditions for Red Cross maritime transports, agreed upon by the ICRC and the belligerents concerned, were set out in a memorandum communicated in April, 1942, to all Governments and National Red Cross Societies.

1. *Safe-conducts.*

Applications for safe-conducts. — The ICRC made it a principle only to apply for free passage provided they could control the use of the vessels concerned. On the other hand, they were not prepared to assume responsibility unless the belligerents undertook to respect the vessels under safe-conduct. These conditions were fulfilled for all vessels sailing under the distinctive markings of the ICRC.

The ICRC, however, occasionally applied for safe-conducts for vessels which did not carry its emblem, and for which it disclaimed any responsibility, either because the belligerents failed to give sufficient security guarantees, or because the ICRC itself was not in a position to exercise effective supervision. As an example of the first class, we may quote the relief transports from Sweden to Germany ¹, and of the second, the sailing vessels first used between Lisbon and Marseilles ², as well as the first Swedish cargo boats which carried relief to Greece, the *Radmenso* and the *Sicilia*, chartered by the British and the American Red Cross respectively.

The ICRC made requests for safe-conducts direct to the Governments of the Powers whose naval forces were likely to encounter the vessels. An exception was made in the case of safe-conducts required from the Soviet authorities, where the requests were sent through the intermediary of their Allies.

Description of vessels. — Application for a safe-conduct had to be made for a specific purpose, in respect of a vessel of given name and precise description. The ICRC was greatly hampered by this requirement, as it never knew how long an interval would elapse before the application was granted ³. Furthermore, there was no fixed time limit for giving notice, such as that which applied to the notification of routes. Particulars of each vessel had also to be communicated to the belligerents to permit its identification by their naval forces.

Nationality of the vessels. — None of the belligerents imposed conditions as to the class of vessels to be employed, but the ICRC, as far as possible, had recourse only to neutral ships. The Committee also applied for safe-conducts in respect of vessels under belligerent flags (French, Greek, Italian, Rumanian and Yugoslav). Vessels sailing under the Red Cross emblem in fact

¹ See p. 163.

² See p. 158.

³ Detention of a ship while awaiting a safe-conduct led to considerable demurrage. If, on the contrary, the vessel was kept in service, there was the risk of its no longer being available when the safe-conduct was finally granted, which involved finding another vessel and filing a new application.

all flew a neutral flag, with the exception of the Greek steamer *Nereus*, which was none the less under charter to the Swiss Confederation. In one case only did ships in the service of the ICRC belong to a power which meanwhile became belligerent. These were the Turkish caiques employed on the transport of relief to the Aegean Islands. As already recorded, the vessels nevertheless continued to enjoy the immunity which had been previously granted ¹.

Blockade.—The blockade influenced the belligerents in their decisions, and reciprocity therefore was an important factor in the success of the Committee's applications. For instance, the German authorities only consented to the Foundation's using Swedish vessels in the Baltic, on condition of receiving equivalent tonnage from the enemy ².

Immunities. — In principle, vessels sailing under safe-conduct ³ were protected and respected. In practice, their security depended upon the manner in which they obeyed the navigation regulations to which they were subject ⁴. In this respect, each of the belligerents concerned made certain exceptions and repeatedly recalled that no absolute guarantees could be granted; these vessels were, in fact, subject to the inevitable risks of war.

Violations. — Three vessels sailing under the emblem and control of the ICRC suffered attack by air. The *Stureborg* was torpedoed by two Italian planes and sank on June 9, 1942, when returning from the Piraeus to Alexandria. The *Embla* was twice

¹ See p. 128.

² See Report of the Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports, p. 7 et seq.

³ This granting of free passage should not be confused with the special licenses which were required for vessels to pass the blockade, for instance, the British "shipwarrant" and "navy certificate" (or "navicert"), which covered both the ship and the cargo. The "navicert" was compulsory. The Committee's vessels were not, in principle, obliged to carry the "shipwarrant", but it was preferable for them to have this document, in order to avoid delays. The formalities relative to the "shipwarrant" were usually fulfilled by the consignors.

⁴ See below p. 149.

attacked in the Gulf of Lions by a formation of British aircraft, on April 6 and 19, 1944, and sank during the second attack. The *Cristina* was similarly attacked in the roadstead of Sète, on May 6, 1944. She was later refloated.

The ICRC notified the Powers concerned of these violations and, in view of the repeated attacks suffered by their vessels in the spring of 1944, decided to suspend the service until satisfactory guarantees were given. It was established that in no case had there been neglect on the part of the ICRC, and that the attacks on their vessels by belligerents therefore constituted a violation of the agreements made for these transports.

After an enquiry, the Italian Government offered an official apology for the attack on the *Stureborg*: the British Government did likewise in respect of the *Embla* and the *Cristina*, and gave pledges for the future. With regard to compensation, action by the ICRC was not required; the matter was settled between the interested parties, either direct, or in the case of the *Stureborg* through the Protecting Power.

Despite these incidents, the safe-conducts granted by the belligerents enabled the ICRC to carry out its tasks effectively until the end of the war. We may add that in proportion to the number of sailings made, the losses were very small compared with those of other merchant fleets. In fact, only five per cent of the goods carried, and less than three per cent of the tonnage employed were lost ¹.

2. *Distinctive Markings.*

Red Cross emblem and markings. — In June 1940, during the preliminary discussions with regard to a cross-Channel service by a single vessel, the Committee had already suggested to the British and German Governments that the ship should be placed under the protection of the Red Cross emblem ². The

¹ On January 26, 1944, the Swedish Minister at Berne wrote to the ICRC: "The Swedish Government has always been deeply impressed by the scrupulous care with which the Maritime Department of the ICRC organized and directed the movements of Red Cross vessels, thus ensuring a lower proportion of losses in this service than in any other during the war".

² See above p. 130.

German authorities offered to place a hospital ship at the disposal of the ICRC, while the British authorities suggested the use of a neutral vessel chartered by the ICRC ; they were, however, silent on the question of distinctive markings. Six months later, when applying for authority to put into service the Yugoslav steamer *Herzegovina* and the French ships *Penerf* and *Ile Rousse* for carrying parcels between Lisbon and Marseilles¹, the ICRC advised the British, French, German and Italian Governments of their intention to place the inscription " C. INTERNATIONAL " on these vessels, in addition to a red cross on a white ground.

Before the result of these negotiations was known, transports had been started by means of motorized sailing vessels of the Spanish and Portuguese merchant services. At this time the German and Italian authorities made the safe-conduct, granted to these ships two months previously, conditional upon their being marked thenceforward with the Red Cross emblem. The Committee, however, wished this marking to be reserved for craft over which they could exercise effective control. On the other hand, the British Admiralty objected to the use of the emblem for vessels other than those covered by the Tenth Hague Convention of 1907, and considered that craft sailing under the Committee's auspices would be sufficiently distinguished if they bore an inscription such as " C. INTERNATIONAL C.R. ".

Shortly afterwards, the transports were organized so as to give the Committee the control it desired. Vessels were chartered direct by the British Red Cross, in agreement with the ICRC, and were accompanied by a convoying agent appointed by the Committee. In these circumstances, the ICRC endeavoured to ensure the protection of the Red Cross emblem. Since the Committee's independence and neutrality were pledged, it was in a position to accept responsibility for these transports towards the belligerents, in so far at least as the latter undertook to give them protection.

¹ See below p. 158.

Painting of hulls. — After some discussion, the British authorities finally consented to the vessels bearing the inscription " C. INTERNATIONAL ", followed by a red cross on a white ground, but stipulated that the hulls should not be painted in light colours, which might lead to confusion with hospital ships. Some exceptions were however made later ; for instance, the Swedish vessels chartered by the Foundation sailed in their customary light grey colour.

At the request of the belligerents the inscriptions and Red Cross emblems had to be painted directly on the hulls ; the use of markings on temporary fixtures was not allowed.

Lighting. — The belligerents insisted that the distinctive markings should be illuminated at night. This ruling naturally applied only to ships at sea. In ports of call, they were subject to blackout regulations and were thus exposed to the risk of air raids. In spite of the frequent night bombardments in which they were involved, only one minor incident occurred. Whilst anchored in the port of Genoa, the *Padua* was hit on October 22, 1942, at 10 p.m. by an incendiary bomb and slightly damaged.

Sailing by night on the Port Vendres to Marseilles run was prohibited by the Germans from April 1944 onwards. Vessels which could not complete the passage during the day had to put in at Sète.

Scope of rules. — As the rules for marking the ships were not in line with the regulations of the neutral Powers, the ICRC had to apply to the respective Ministries for licences, but experienced no difficulties in this respect.

Regulations. — During the first two years in which Red Cross vessels were employed, the methods of displaying and lighting the distinctive markings led to much discussion with all the belligerents concerned, and transports were often delayed on this account. The Committee finally obtained the agreement of all belligerents on each point, and clearly defined regulations framed on experience were at last introduced in 1943. The rules for the marking of the Red Cross vessels until the end of the war were the following :

(a) *Principles.*

Every ship sailing under the Committee's control and with the consent of the belligerent Powers concerned, shall display the distinctive markings prescribed below. These markings shall be at once removed when the vessel is no longer employed by the ICRC.

(b) *Arrangement of markings.*

The distinctive markings shall be the inscription "C. INTERNATIONAL" and several Red Cross emblems, thus displayed :

on each side of the vessel and at least one metre above the water-line, the inscription "C. INTERNATIONAL",

on each side, at the end of the hull, fore and aft, the red cross emblem on a white ground,

on deck, fore and aft, preferably on the hatchways, and if required, on the roof of the deckhouses, the Red Cross emblem on a white ground,

in the axis of the ship and in an elevated position, a vertical panel showing the red cross on a white ground.

(c) *Dimensions of markings.*

The dimensions of the markings may vary according to the space available. The markings shall be painted directly on the hull or the deck, where they shall preferably be placed on the hatchways.

The inscription in capital letters "C. INTERNATIONAL" (C full stop INTERNATIONAL) shall be painted in black letters on a white ground, and shall cover the space between the top of the hull and a height one metre above the water-line. The length of the inscription shall be equal to fourteen times the height of the letters.

The dimensions of the Red Cross emblems shall be as great as possible and shall in any case be not less than three metres square. The Red Cross shall be placed in the centre of a white square ; the length of the limbs shall be equal to three quarters, and their thickness to one quarter of one side of the white square. The lower part of the Red Cross emblems appearing fore and aft shall be placed one metre at least above the water-line.

(d) *Illumination.*

The lighting of the distinctive markings by night shall be obligatory and sufficient to make them clearly visible to sea, land and air forces. The illumination of the vertical panel and of one of the horizontal emblems shall be particularly bright.

(e) *Validity of the present regulations.*

The present regulations, instituted with the agreement of the belligerent Powers concerned and ensuring the security of vessels placed at the disposal of the ICRC, shall supersede all other regulations which may be inconsistent with them. Municipal and international laws and customs relative to markings and inscriptions on ships shall apply to the vessels in the Committee's service, without prejudice to the present regulations.

Misuse of markings. — In April 1941, the British Government agreed to the use of the Red Cross emblem on the Committee's vessels, but reserved the right to withdraw their consent, should enemy Governments be shown guilty of misusing the emblem. Throughout the war, however, only once was an incident of this kind reported. According to a communication made by the German Government to the ICRC, German naval forces had observed an unusual number of vessels bearing the Committee's markings and moving along the Portuguese coast, during the night of November 6, 7 and 8, 1942, that is, just before the Allied landing in North Africa. This observation justified every kind of suspicion¹. No confirmation was, however, found for these allegations, and it would therefore appear that on no occasion was there any misuse of Red Cross markings on vessels.

At the end of the War, distinctive markings served no further purpose, and in May 1945, the ICRC removed them from the thirteen vessels which were still being used for Red Cross purposes.

3. *Use of vessels.*

The use of vessels covered by special immunities was intended, in the first place, to make good the breakdown in regular communications which impeded the various welfare services (transport of repatriates, exchange of civil internees, and forwarding of mail and relief supplies). The majority of these schemes failed, however, and only transports of parcels for PW, organized in haste and without previous agreement, had

¹ There were, in fact, six Red Cross vessels sailing in these waters at that particular time.

the approval of the belligerents. The latter made it clear, however, that vessels used for the above purpose should carry no other freight, or passengers, and the British authorities gave their approval only to shipments covered by a navicert. The vessels were moreover required to follow specified routes.

These restrictions remained in force until the end of the war; nevertheless, the facilities granted were later extended to other supplies besides postal parcels, and to new classes of recipients. In July, 1942, by agreement between the ICRC and belligerent Powers, the following ruling for the employment of ships was adopted :

The vessels shall be used exclusively for the transport of goods addressed to the ICRC or its delegates, and composed of relief supplies for prisoners of war and civil internees of all nationalities.

In addition, medicaments and hospital supplies intended for civil populations will be allowed. For all other cargoes addressed to the ICRC or the Joint Relief Commission and intended for other categories of war victims, the ICRC must obtain the previous agreement of the belligerent Powers.

The British authorities requested the ICRC to add the following prescription :

Mail bags, addressed to the Swiss postal authorities or to the ICRC, and containing PW parcels, may also be conveyed by Red Cross vessels.

The ICRC was later authorized, in principle, to forward relief supplies intended for the civil population of occupied countries, on condition that these shipments were provided with navicerts.

The transport of material necessary for carrying out relief schemes, such as motor vehicles, lubricants, tyres, and so forth, was also permitted.

These provisions also applied to mail for PW and civilian internees, but this concession in principle only held good for letters exempt from postal charges : the conveyance of Civilian Messages on Red Cross forms therefore required special authority ¹.

¹ This authority was refused for the transport of civilian messages by the *Vega* to and from the Channel Islands, as the German authorities were unable to organize a censorship in the Islands.

On the other hand, the ICRC was unable to get the use of a vessel to carry medicaments and supplies for the medical corps of expeditionary forces ¹.

From 1944 onwards, a few exceptions were made to the ban on the transport of passengers. At the request of the Swedish Government, the Committee agreed to allow their diplomatic messengers and other Swedish citizens to travel on Swedish vessels chartered by the Foundation, subject to the approval of the belligerents concerned. In all, 145 passengers thus crossed the Atlantic on Red Cross ships.

The use of the Committee's vessels for the evacuation of groups of civilian war victims gave rise to no objection in principle. The attempts made to put this scheme into practice were, however, usually frustrated, owing to the tacit opposition of one or other of the belligerents. The Committee could not, of course, undertake such operations without the formal consent of all Governments concerned.

In short, the Red Cross vessels were restricted to the transport, over certain routes, of PW mail and authorized relief supplies, addressed to the Committee and for the exclusive use of specified categories of war victims.

As a result of the supervision carried out by the Committee's delegates few incidents occurred, and none was serious. Some cases of ordinary merchandise were loaded by mistake at Lisbon on one occasion ². There were, however, a number of stowaways. These were usually put on shore before sailing; a few were discovered too late for them to be landed ³.

¹ See above p. 128.

² The ICRC informed the British authorities and offered to send the cases back to Lisbon, but it was finally agreed that the goods should be handed over to the consignee in Switzerland.

³ Some Portuguese who left Lisbon on Red Cross vessels bound for the United States were taken back to Lisbon at the request of the U.S. authorities. An Alsatian citizen found on board the *Embla*, which left Marseilles on December 26, 1942, was landed at Gibraltar by the British authorities. This incident might have had serious consequences for the ICRC transport system, as the British authorities refused to ship the man back to Marseilles, as was demanded by the German authorities there. A German PW was also found, on April 25, 1945, on board the *Caritas II* on arrival at Lisbon; this stowaway had escaped the notice of the Allied control officials, both at Toulon and Gibraltar.

The convoying agents were bound to inform the authorities concerned of any merchandise or stowaways found on board, and thus at the first opportunity curtail any misuse of the immunities granted by the belligerents. Any such irregularities were subject to common law, whatever the circumstances. Claims put in by a belligerent could only be referred to the belligerent Power concerned, together with a statement of the Committee's opinion.

Allocation of tonnage was subject to the sole condition that the vessels should be at the disposal of both adverse parties. When granting safe-conducts for ships carrying parcels for PW held in Europe, both Germany and Italy specified that the same vessels should, on their return voyage, carry relief supplies for their own nationals in Allied hands. As a matter of fact, the Axis Powers very seldom had recourse to the Committee's vessels ¹.

Since the ICRC itself had no funds with which to procure means of transport, these were supplied by the relief organizations or the Governments concerned. The latter were, however, inclined to claim the exclusive use of the vessels thus supplied, whereas the Committee's policy of strict impartiality forbade it to waive its rights in favour of any particular body. The ICRC therefore accepted means of transport only on condition of being free to use them for the benefit of all nationalities; the only concession made was a bare priority for the organization bearing the costs incurred.

The Committee's delegations in the sailing ports allocated the available cargo space equally amongst all concerned, according to the volume and priority of the goods to be shipped, and irrespective of the charterers and the ship's origin ². This system allowed the Committee at the same time to co-ordinate

¹ About 1 ½ per cent of the total tonnage shipped.

² A similar arrangement was made with the Swiss Federal Maritime Transport Service, with reference to the cargo space which this Service placed at the disposal of the Red Cross in Swiss vessels sailing between South America and Europe. Applications for freightage were referred to the ICRC, which allocated the space available between the relief organizations concerned.

its transport, build up stocks, and space out the shipments according to their urgency.

4. *Organization of supervision.*

The ICRC was obliged, in view of its responsibilities, to take steps for the protection of the rights of belligerents. It was unable, however, to give any absolute guarantees, especially before having acquired some experience in this field. The Italian Government, which was dissatisfied with these reservations, proposed that the ships should call at an Italian port, instead of Marseilles, in order to "ease the task of the ICRC and to simplify the machinery of supervision". But the gradual organization of transports allowed the Committee to exercise more effective control and to gain the belligerents' confidence to an increasing degree. These Powers confined themselves to sanctioning and making compulsory the presence of convoying agents, whom the ICRC had itself introduced on the vessels sailing under the Red Cross flag. In other respects the ships at sea and in port were subject to the same supervision as any other neutral merchant shipping.

Special charter clauses. — Since financial considerations prevented the ICRC from purchasing or chartering ships itself, it could only fulfil its obligation towards the belligerents by obtaining certain guarantees in turn from the owners and charterers. To this end, it required of all subscribers to the charter-party a formal undertaking to observe and to ensure the observation of the regulations laid down for Red Cross transports. The purpose of the charter had to be expressly named in the agreements: the contracting parties undertook to place the vessels at the sole disposal of the ICRC, and to follow the instructions given them by its representatives, in particular those relating to schedule and routes.

Chartering was also subject to the following clauses:

(1) *Distinctive marking of the Committee's vessels.* — The location and dimensions of these inscriptions and emblems must be approved by the Committee's agents. They must be in position before sailing

for the first voyage ; they must be kept in good order and removed before the vessels is returned to the owners. All costs incidental to the markings and to their illumination shall be placed to the ship's account.

(2) *Restrictions on the use of the vessels.* — The Committee's vessels are exclusively reserved for the transport of shipments that are intended for the categories of war victims entitled to such relief supplies, and that are addressed to the ICRC (or to its delegates, or the Joint Relief Commission), for distribution under its supervision. Only the goods entered on the ship's manifest, which must be handed for signature to the Committee's representatives at the loading port, may and shall be on board. Without special authority from the ICRC at Geneva, no persons except the regular crew and the convoying agent appointed by the Committee may sail on board any of these ships.

(3) *Convoying agents of the ICRC.* — Since the obligations towards the belligerents impose a responsibility upon the ICRC, the Committee shall place a convoying agent on board each vessel, to represent the ICRC in all questions involving its interests. The primary duty of the convoying agent shall be to ensure the observance of the pledges given by the Committee, covering the vessel. The ship will supply the convoying agent with appropriate accommodation and food.

(4) *Supervision of vessels of the ICRC.* — The interests of the vessel itself demand that the restrictions imposed by belligerents in accordance with Paragraph (2) should be strictly observed. The master must therefore take all steps he may find desirable to prevent any infringement of the restrictions. He shall give all necessary orders and explanations to the crew. The convoying agent shall assist in the supervision. Since both master and convoying agent have the same objects in view, their co-operation should present no difficulties. Their action should be based on mutual confidence and the desire to render service to the ICRC.

If, despite all precautions, stowaways or unauthorized cargo are discovered during the voyage, such persons or goods shall in principle be taken back to the sailing port and put ashore. The captain and the convoying agent shall do their utmost to follow this rule, and all vessels in the service of the ICRC shall lend each other assistance.

(5) *Neutrality of Red Cross vessels.* — The duties assigned to the Red Cross vessels entail the observance of strict neutrality by all personnel on board. Masters shall require their crews to abstain from giving to any third person any information that might be of interest to belligerents. Members of the crew must refuse to answer questions put to them by officials, except those relating to their duties on board, stating, if necessary, that they have strict orders from the ICRC to this effect.

(6) *Validity of the present regulations.* — Certain international, municipal or other laws and regulations may be contrary to the foregoing clauses. In such an event it shall be expressly understood that the above stipulations, the purpose of which is to ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred towards belligerents, supersede all other considerations. These shall be waived in face of the overriding interests of the ICRC, whose maritime transport service cannot be carried on without the fulfilment of the said obligations.

The above provisions were inserted in the charter-parties. The ICRC moreover reserved the right to name the consignees of both vessels and cargo.

Delegations. — The Committee's delegations organized and supervised the loading and unloading of the ships. They had sole responsibility for the allocation of tonnage for the various consignments ; they received and forwarded cargoes, determined the schedules for each voyage (which had to be notified to the belligerents concerned), and gave the necessary instructions to the owners or their agents, particularly in regard to distinctive markings, sailing dates and routes. The delegations themselves discussed all matters relating to the movements of vessels with the local authorities and the representatives of belligerent Powers in neutral countries. This method prevented the risk of contradictory instructions to the masters. When on duty, the convoying agents took their instructions direct from the delegations in the ports.

Convoying agents. — On receiving authority to organize maritime transport, the ICRC decided that supervision should be exercised by convoying agents exclusively of Swiss nationality. The belligerents soon demanded that all vessels sailing under safe-conduct should be accompanied by such agents. This was however not always possible ; on several occasions, disordered communications and the long delays in obtaining visas prevented the agent appointed from arriving in time ¹. To avoid holding up the transport, the vessel then sailed according to schedule,

¹ Convoying agents travelled with ordinary passports and were signed on as part of the crew for the duration of their mission. They carried official commissions from the ICRC and wore armlets with the Red Cross badge.

whilst the belligerents were notified that no convoying agent was on board. Incidents of this kind became, in time, so common that the ICRC in December 1944 requested the belligerents to release it from this obligation. They agreed to dispense with the convoying, but reserved the right to ask for it in special cases. The Committee, for their part, continued to place convoying agents on board, whenever possible.

Although the belligerents had insisted on the presence of such representatives, they omitted to specify their duties. Before leaving, each convoying agent received instructions from the ICRC ; these were to ensure strict application of the regulations for the use of the vessel and the distinctive markings, to be present at all loadings and unloadings, to obtain a nominal roll of the crew, and copies of the bill of lading, the postal way-bills, and so forth.

The convoying agent had to remain on board from the time the customs water-guard went ashore, until the officers at the arrival port came on board. He was empowered to make a complete inspection of the vessel. During the voyage, no cargo could be loaded or discharged ; no strangers were admitted on board and no-one could leave the ship. In the event of any infringements of the obligations assumed towards the belligerents, the convoying agent had to take all appropriate steps. Responsibility for navigation, however, belonged exclusively to the master.

Crews. — The ICRC took no part in the enlistment of crews ; it did, however, stipulate that all members of ships' crews should be nationals of States recognized as neutral. When the signing on of seamen who were citizens of belligerent countries became unavoidable, the Committee submitted such cases for the approval of the Powers ¹. These raised no objection to the

¹ This undertaking could only be kept with difficulty, for it was by no means easy to find neutral seamen. Moreover, this restriction, voluntarily established by the ICRC, proved unnecessary. The crews of the Swiss merchant fleet consisted, to a great extent, of nationals of belligerent countries, and most of these vessels had Russian or Belgian masters, without causing any disadvantage. All the incidents in connexion with the crews of ICRC vessels concerned neutral seamen, except in one case, where a British subject had been signed on.

signing on of seamen of non-neutral countries (the Baltic States, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Norway and Russia), whose services had to be enlisted in various occasions ¹.

The crews were recruited in neutral countries ; those intended for Red Cross vessels sailing from a belligerent port were usually conveyed there by other ICRC ships.

The Committee ordered the immediate discharge of any seaman who was clearly not approved by one or other of the belligerents. This measure had to be taken only on four occasions ².

The British Government insisted, in the case of the *Rosa Smith*, which sailed between Gothenburg and Aberdeen, that the crew list should be submitted to the British Consul at Gothenburg. The members of the crew were allowed to go ashore at Aberdeen, but could not leave the town.

The various measures of supervision adopted by the ICRC proved in practice to be adequate, since their vessels had the confidence of the belligerents until the end of the war.

6. *Provisions relating to navigation.*

In addition to safe-conducts and the use of the Red Cross emblem, the security of the vessels called for other precautions. Ships had to follow the routes laid down by the Committee in agreement with the belligerents. However, such agreement was often very difficult to obtain, and this seriously delayed the sailings. Vessels could not put to sea when each of the parties wished a different route to be followed, and if discussions did not lead to at least some provisional arrangement, the service was suspended for an indefinite period.

¹ When it was proposed to charter an ICRC vessel for service in the Far East, the Allies consented to the crew's being composed of Japanese seamen, provided this concession induced the Japanese authorities to approve Red Cross transports.

² The discharge of a Swedish officer of the *Vega* at Lisbon, which was demanded by the Armistice Commission at Marseilles, led to an incident in November 1942. The master, the owners and the British Red Cross refused to dismiss this officer, who had been brought by air at great expense from Sweden to Lisbon. They changed their views, however, and engaged a Finnish substitute, so that the ICRC was able to authorize the vessel to resume its service.

Notification. — When the belligerents concerned were informed that the first Red Cross transports would take place, they declined to give any guarantee of the vessel's safety unless the time-table to be followed was communicated to them ten days in advance. Thus, whereas the safe conduct was granted once and for all, notification of the time-table had to be made for each voyage. The Italian authorities even demanded that the Committee should await confirmation of their consent before giving sailing orders ¹.

The notification procedure was laid down by each belligerent and was frequently modified. Notice of the time-table, in particular, was at first required ten days in advance, afterwards six, and finally four days. Some belligerents even accepted 48 hours previous notice ; the period varied also according to the route followed.

The notification included a detailed schedule of the outward and return voyage, including ports of call and dates of clearing and arrival at the various ports. When a vessel sailed from a neutral port, the notification was made by the ICRC delegation to the naval attachés of the belligerent States ; sailings from belligerent ports were notified direct to the Governments concerned by the ICRC itself.

The object of notification was to allow belligerent Governments to inform their armed forces. Its chief disadvantage was that any vessel which for some reason could not keep to the schedule, had to be held in port during the period required for fresh notification. The ICRC was, moreover, at times completely cut off from all communication with its ships : it had, for instance, from 1944 onwards, no means of rapid communication with its delegations in Marseilles and Toulon, and was in consequence not in a position to report any delays incurred by vessels calling at these ports ².

¹ When this consent arrived after the proposed sailing date, a fresh notification with ten days' notice was required.

² For instance, the ICRC was unable to report to the British authorities before June 19, 1944, that the sailing from Sète of the *Cristina*, notified for June 13, 1944, had been delayed until June 25. The Foreign Office at once informed the Committee that they could accept no responsibility in respect of this vessel until the military authorities had received the fresh notification.

Sea routes. — Safe-conducts were granted for voyages not only between the ports of call, but also along courses precisely defined by geographical pin-points. The determination of the route was one cause of unfortunate delays, as it usually entailed drawn-out negotiations with the belligerents. One of the Governments concerned would sometimes accept beforehand the route to be fixed by its allies, or would even leave it in part to the discretion of the adversary. All parties were informed of the route finally chosen. However, changes were often demanded during the time the vessels were in service. Shoals or mine-fields made certain routes very dangerous for ships, which bad weather might divert slightly from their course. The *Vega* in this way ran aground on a sand bank, and the *Padua* sank after striking a mine in the Gulf of Lions.

Pilots. — Governments often insisted that the vessels should take pilots on board, especially in the territorial waters of belligerent States ¹.

In view of the dangers to navigation between Port Vendres and Marseilles, the ICRC itself requested the German authorities to provide pilots. The request was granted, on condition that the pilots should be regarded as neutral; this the United States Government accepted, but the British Government refused. Three months later, the British revoked their decision and gave an assurance that pilots shipped between Port Vendres and Marseilles would be treated as neutrals by the British authorities, and be exempt from capture. After this arrangement no further incidents occurred on this route.

Pilots whose services were used in other waters did not receive favoured treatment, since the Red Cross vessels had not been granted extra-territorial status.

Reports of position by wireless. — In May 1944, shortly after the attacks on the *Embla* and the *Cristina*, the British Government requested that, as an additional precaution, ICRC vessels should give their position by wireless, to permit their identifica-

¹ This was the usual practice between Rhodes and the Piraeus, in the Faroe Islands channel, the Delaware estuary, German waters of the Baltic and the North Sea, the Channel Islands, and so on.

tion by the armed forces. The British authorities stated that the Allied air forces in the Mediterranean declined all responsibility for air attacks, unless certain information in respect of sailings were given in good time. The German authorities, on being consulted, agreed to the use of wireless on board. After frequent changes during the first three months¹, the regulations for wireless signals were fixed as follows in August 1944.

(1) Signals by radio every four hours starting from midnight (C.E.T.) on 600 metres (500 kilocycles) in the following order.

“Position at... hours GMT ; latitude..., longitude..., course..., speed... knots...”.

(2) Position by wireless daily on 600 metres to radio stations at Algiers (or Gibraltar), and Coltano (Leghorn).

(3) In the event of an unexpected call at an intermediate port :

(a) The master shall give notice by wireless (600 metres, 500 kilocycles) of his intention of putting into port and shall inform the Lisbon delegation of his arrival and of the probable date and hour of sailing. The master shall also give notice, at least four days before sailing, to the owners or their agents, for transmission to the British authorities, of the probable date and time of sailing from the port of call.

(b) The master shall give at least 48 hours previous notice of sailing from the port of call by wireless.

(4) Should the ship's wireless be unable to reach the stations of Algiers, Gibraltar and Coltano, the aforesaid communications shall be sent through Spanish radio stations.

The consent of the Spanish Government was necessary for calling at Spanish ports. It was granted with the following reservations : wireless communications to be limited to the dates of arrival and sailing and to be made either in clear, or in international code. Transmissions to be made in the frequencies in international use for the service of the merchant marine.

¹ Six vessels which had been held up at Marseilles whilst these formalities were being completed, were allowed to leave port without observing the new regulations, on condition that they sailed in convoy.

In December 1944, the British Government informed the ICRC that its vessels were no longer required to give their position by wireless in the Mediterranean. The measure was therefore only applied when this zone was a major theatre of war.

In the Atlantic, the ICRC vessels had to give their position once a day to their national station on a wavelength of 500 kilocycles. The *Rosa Smith*, sailing between Aberdeen and Gothenburg, had to give her position twice a day.

Scope of regulations. — All these regulations were intended to enhance the safety of the Committee's vessels. The latter might, however, on occasion be unable to comply with them, owing either to orders issued by the military authorities, or to some other imperative reason. The question arose, therefore, whether vessels might be without protection in especially dangerous situations. The British Government repeatedly made it clear that they would accept no responsibility for attacks on ships or crews that had failed strictly to observe regulations. The ICRC vessels were thus exposed to the perils inevitable in a state of war, whilst their safety depended solely on the exact observance of all regulations to which they were subject. Although no consequences ensued, the fact that these vessels bore the onus of obligations which could not in all circumstances be fulfilled, created an unusual situation. From a logical point of view, withdrawal of protection could only be grounded in breaches of the general conditions governing safe - conducts, use of the vessel, schedule of routes, and distinctive markings. This question was not specially discussed, but the Italian authorities seemed to have interpreted the principles of protection in this sense. When the ICRC made certain reservations early in 1941 regarding the use of the Red Cross emblem, they replied as follows :

"With regard to the display of the distinctive Red Cross markings, the Ministry believe that it is precisely, and *a fortiori* the fact that routes, port of call, sailing dates, etc., may not always be stated in advance, which makes it advisable for sailing-ships to bear the Red Cross emblem, particularly for their protection against air attack."

In conclusion, provisions governing navigation should be framed solely to ensure the better identification of the vessels ; the protection of those vessels should not be in any way conditional on such regulations. Belligerents should not therefore be entitled to decline all responsibility for attacks against vessels displaying the emblem, on the grounds that they were unable to identify them.

7. *Transfer of flag.*

Owing to the losses suffered by their merchant fleets, the neutral countries were hardly able to offer tonnage to the ICRC. Moreover, the United States and the German authorities had on several occasions expressed a wish for all Red Cross transport to be placed under the control of the ICRC and under the Swiss flag. The Committee therefore asked the Governments concerned to grant exceptions to the provisions of international law governing the transfer of flag, and succeeded in having three belligerent vessels placed under the Swiss flag.

The Swiss Confederation approved these transfers, on condition that the vessels should be subject to Swiss law, in particular with regard to transfer of ownership of the vessels to Swiss nationals, and removal from the shipping register of the home country. The ICRC was, moreover, required to obtain the consent of the belligerents to the proposed transfers, and to take responsibility for the employment of the vessels, which could not be included in the allocation of tonnage assigned to Switzerland by the belligerents.

On the occasion of the purchase of the *Frederic*, a Belgian steamer held up at Casablanca, the German Government made the transfer of ownership conditional on its right to demand at any time the return of the vessel to her owners¹. The British Government stipulated that no financial profit from the transfer should accrue, even indirectly, to the enemy Powers.

In order to reconcile these various conditions, the transfers were effected on a basis of sale with privilege of repurchase,

¹ The Swiss Political Department agreed to the German reservation, with the approval of the Belgian Government in London.

and payment was deferred until the end of the war. The vessels were not subject to registration fee for their entry in the Swiss Register ¹.

Whereas the commissioning of neutral vessels as Red Cross transports was subject only to concurrence between certain belligerent Powers, transfers of nationality had to be notified to all Governments concerned by the Swiss diplomatic representatives.

The Committee sought the preliminary agreement of the Belgian, Brazilian, British, French, German, Italian, Swiss and United States Governments. Thereafter, it was found necessary to secure the adherence of Japan too, because this country, at the time of the initial transfer, had made reservations on the score that she might later regard this change of flag as a derogation to certain provisions of international law.

In short the ICRC, in order to transfer belligerent vessels to a neutral flag, had to bring about the following :

(1) Belligerents should waive their right, recognized by the London Declaration of 1909, to consider such transfers as null and void.

(2) The ownership of the vessel should be transferred to a Swiss corporate body.

(3) The purchase should not lead to any financial gain to the belligerents.

(4) These Powers should consent to release ships in spite of their own needs of tonnage.

(5) The Foundation should obtain adequate financial support to cover the risks of operating the vessels thus acquired.

Lastly, the status of vessels transferred to the Foundation was identical with that of the other ships sailing under the control of the ICRC.

¹ For clauses relating to the sales and financial guarantees, see the Report of the Foundation.

§ 3. TECHNICAL ORGANIZATION

Chartering. — The first shipments under safe-conduct comprising parcels for PW were made possible by contracts entered into with a Portuguese firm, which over a period of three months was responsible for chartering the required tonnage.

The ICRC also contemplated the chartering of ships ¹ either at the expense of the Governments concerned, or at the charge of National Red Cross Societies. The plans fell through and the Committee soon abandoned the idea, having in the meantime had recourse to a method by which its own interests and those of relief organizations and Governments were protected. Charter-parties were concluded between the British Red Cross and owners in neutral countries, but the ICRC had the exclusive use of the vessels and all facilities for carrying out the supervision required by the belligerents.

This system, concurrently with another adopted in 1942, lasted until the end of the war. After the United States' entry into the war, the American Red Cross asked the ICRC if the relief supplies given by them might not be carried by vessels flying the Swiss flag and sailing under the same conditions as the ships of the Committee already in service. On being consulted, the Swiss Government were willing to allow vessels to be transferred to their flag, provided the ICRC obtained the necessary authority. They offered meantime to set aside from 2,000 to 3,000 tons per month of cargo space in their own ships, for use in the transatlantic service of the Red Cross ².

As the relief consignments planned greatly exceeded this figure, the proposal of the American Red Cross, which was endorsed by the U. S. State Department, was accepted, and the ICRC, together with the Swiss authorities, studied means for giving it effect. The ICRC then decided to set up a Foundation

¹ This condition was made by the British Government during the discussion of the cross-Channel scheme. See above p. 130.

² This proposal was discussed by the British and Swiss authorities and the conditions for releasing Swiss tonnage for Red Cross transports were laid down in the Agreement of April 9, 1942.

governed by Swiss law, for the purpose of acquiring the vessels to be transferred to the Swiss flag, and of taking responsibility for the relief shipments entrusted to the Committee. The vessels purchased by the said Foundation were to be managed either by this body, or by a shipping agent of Swiss nationality. According to Swiss law, the vessels could not be chartered by a foreign organization. The Foundation, however, was authorized to charter vessels sailing under foreign flags.

From 1942 onwards, therefore, the shipment of relief supplies was in the hands of a special Red Cross body, the activity of which was nevertheless subject to the ICRC¹.

In point of fact, the Foundation purchased only three vessels. Most of the cargoes were carried by ships under charter, mainly because the purchase of ships and the change of flag created such difficulties on each occasion as to leave small chance of any settlement within a reasonable space of time.

In the end, only vessels chartered by the British Red Cross, or by the Foundation, or ships belonging to the latter body, were used as transports under the emblem of the ICRC.

The terms of the charters were adapted to the forms in common use, and were different in almost every case; some vessels were on time-charter, some for the voyage and others for the duration of the war.

Financing. — The recovery of freight and costs for vessels chartered by the British Red Cross was ensured by the ICRC delegation, which made up the invoices according to the tonnage allocated amongst the consignors, and reimbursed the British Red Cross. The Foundation settled in respect of its own vessels, as a rule direct with the consignors, and the ICRC was only required to act in the case of certain transfers of funds.

The freight rates varied according to the charter-parties. For the Foundation's vessels the rates were calculated at cost level, as this body asked no remuneration for its services and had also certain taxation privileges.

¹ The formation and activities of the Foundation are shown in the Report of its administration issued together with the present Report.

Part of the relief supplies carried consisted of sacks of postal parcels which were conveyed free. The net cost of carriage was charged by the ICRC to the National Red Cross Societies of the recipients. The charterers did not ask for repayment of carriage of bags containing PW mail.

Administration. — Negotiations with belligerents were the sole concern of the ICRC. A separate department was set up for this purpose ; it was at first attached to the Relief Division, and later on to the Transport and Communications Division, which was formed in August 1942 and placed under a Commission of the ICRC.

The Transport and Communications Division had the task of approaching Governments on transport questions, and supervised the general work of the Maritime Transport Service, to which the convoying agents were directly responsible. Instructions to shipowners, charterers or masters were given through the delegations, or the Foundation.

§ 4. WORK ACCOMPLISHED

1. *Lisbon-Marseilles*

At the outbreak of the war, relief supplies for Allied PW were conveyed from Lisbon to Germany by rail. In the winter of 1940, the Spanish Government was obliged to prohibit the transit of goods from Portugal over its railway system. The ICRC then began to carry relief supplies by sea from Lisbon to Genoa or Marseilles. Our review of this service, as of the others dealt with below, will be confined to essentials ; space does not permit an account in detail of the technical problems connected with the various shipping routes, of the many negotiations they involved, or of the regulations — frequently modified — which were established by the belligerents ¹.

¹ Figures are given in the volume of Annexes showing the movements of the vessels which during the war carried relief supplies under the Committee's auspices for PW, civilian internees and civil populations. The Committee is able to supply full data on all technical questions relating to their Maritime Transport Service.

The first shipments in the Mediterranean began in December 1939 and January 1940, and were carried out by small Portuguese sailing ships chartered by the British Red Cross and sailing under a safe-conduct from the belligerents. Their supervision was not, however, sufficiently strict, and the German Government indicated that they were disinclined to place confidence in these vessels for an indefinite period. The ICRC then had recourse to steamers, each having one of their agents on board ; these would carry exclusively goods intended for PW and civilian internees. This course proved satisfactory as regards British PW ; it was not so, however, in the case of French PW, since the plan for employing vessels chartered by the French Red Cross met with insurmountable obstacles. The French authorities, who were faced with urgent needs, had to resort to " block-trains " from Portugal, although the costs were heavy.

After the United States came into the war, shipments for PW steadily increased, and the use of large cargo-vessels became essential. There were, moreover, drawbacks to the chartering of Portuguese steamers, since the ICRC had to deal with shipowners on a purely commercial basis ; furthermore, no voyage could be made without authority from the Portuguese Government. At this juncture the Foundation for Red Cross Transports, recently set up by the ICRC, purchased the Belgian vessels *Frederic*, which thenceforth sailed under the name of *Caritas I*. This ship was intended for the United States-Marseilles route, but its first voyage was from Lisbon to the Mediterranean.

In November 1942, the Allied landing in North Africa made navigation in the Mediterranean extremely hazardous ; one Red Cross vessel was caught in an air raid on Genoa. The dangers became such that the Portuguese Government forbade its merchant ships to call at Mediterranean ports. As rail communications had also broken down between Marseilles and Geneva, all consignments from Lisbon had to be suspended. When these routes were re-opened, Spanish, Portuguese and Swedish vessels chartered by the British Red Cross were employed.

The increasing pitch of war in the Mediterranean had its effect on Red Cross transports. Some vessels were exposed

to great risks in following the difficult routes laid down by the belligerents. Others were repeatedly attacked by aircraft, and one was sunk. The ICRC then suspended the Marseilles-Lisbon service and sent a protest to London. The British authorities expressed their regret; to avoid the recurrence of similar incidents, they requested that the Red Cross vessels should report their position and speed four times a day by wireless. Several cargo-boats were thus able to leave Marseilles, but shortly afterwards the Allied landing on the French coast (August, 1944) again held up all navigation. Since there was no more room in the warehouses at Lisbon for goods which continued to arrive from overseas, several ships unloaded at Barcelona. By the autumn of 1944, conditions for navigation had once more become almost normal, and it was possible to send relief supplies to Toulon, until the port of Marseilles was again made serviceable.

After the end of hostilities, the ICRC considered that ships bearing the Red Cross emblem and convoyed by its agents were no longer necessary, and informed the Red Cross Societies of the Allied countries of this view. However, at their express demand, the Committee's Maritime Service was continued for a time, until the stores of relief supplies in the various ports had been cleared.

2. North African Route

After the events of 1942, German PW camps were set up in North Africa; on the other hand, France was no longer able to obtain goods direct from Algeria for French PW. The ICRC therefore endeavoured to establish a link between Marseilles and Algiers or Casablanca. No more neutral vessels being available, ships already in its service had to be used. Some of the vessels on shuttle service between Lisbon and Marseilles therefore touched at Casablanca, to unload supplies for German PW and to take on board others for French PW.

These irregular passages proved inadequate, and other expedients had to be found. Goods from North Africa were transported to Lisbon free of charge by the British Admiralty,

and thence to Marseilles on Red Cross ships. After the landings in France, the Allied services were able to send supplies direct to that country. Relief supplies from the German Red Cross had to be shipped by the Northern route. The first consignment reached Casablanca direct from Gothenburg, the others were shipped from Gothenburg to Philadelphia, and were thence forwarded to Casablanca by the American Red Cross.

3. *South American Route*

Throughout the war, relief supplies from South America were carried almost entirely in Swiss vessels. Agreements concluded by the British and United States Governments and by the ICRC with the Swiss Government supplied the Argentine Red Cross with cargo space of varying capacity in vessels detailed for carrying food to Switzerland. This space it was asked to allocate impartially between the various Allied nations. The system did not however allow of rapid disposal of available stocks. The British Red Cross therefore, at the beginning of 1943, chartered a Swedish vessel lying in Buenos Aires, which then made several voyages between that port and Marseilles, with the consent of the belligerents and under the emblem of the ICRC.

4. *North American Route*

In the early years of the war, the American Red Cross had sent relief supplies to Europe on board American ships, which unloaded at Lisbon. The United States, on entering the war, were anxious to supply their nationals held in Europe and Japan. Two maritime services, Atlantic and Pacific, were planned for this purpose, under the auspices of the ICRC ; they were the subject of negotiations at the beginning of 1942, and in the case of the Atlantic transports, were brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

American tonnage being no longer available, the American Red Cross set about finding neutral cargo-boats. The ICRC was asked if it would consent to ship American consignments on steamers flying the Swiss flag and displaying the ICRC

emblems. The difficulty lay in reconciling this procedure with Swiss law ; it was not overcome until the ICRC had set up the Foundation, which was then able to purchase neutral vessels and sail them under the Swiss flag.

The conveyance of relief supplies between the two continents formed the main activity of the Foundation. Eighty-seven per cent of the cargoes shipped by vessels bought or chartered by the Foundation was carried from Philadelphia to Marseilles and Gothenburg. The vessels on this route also accounted for most of the shipments made under the ICRC emblem. Further data on the structure and operation of this regular service will be found in the Report of the Foundation.

Negotiations which took place at that time between the Swiss and British Governments led to an agreement, countersigned by the ICRC, under which Switzerland set aside 4,000 tons a month for the ICRC, 3,000 tons being allotted to the British Red Cross and 1,000 tons to the American Red Cross. These cargoes were carried at preferential rates. In its concern for neutrality, the Swiss Federal Government decided that, on the return voyage from Europe, the cargo space it had made available to belligerents should be used for relief supplies sent to PW of the Axis countries in the United States and Canada.

Four vessels chartered by the British Red Cross occasionally formed part of these transports.

In the summer of 1944 the Allied landing in the South of France debarred the port of Marseilles from use by navigation. The ICRC had already considered the possibility of linking North America with a North German port, via the Faroe Isles and the Scandinavian coast. The dangers to shipping north of the German coast prevented Red Cross vessels in the Atlantic service from sailing direct to German ports. The ICRC was thus obliged to warehouse relief supplies at Gothenburg, which henceforth served as a relay station for goods bound for Germany from the North. A delegation was opened there, with the same duties for the Baltic as those of the delegation in Lisbon for the Mediterranean.

A few vessels, nevertheless, continued to operate on the southern route and discharged their cargoes at Barcelona,

to be warehoused pending the re-opening of the ports of Marseilles and Toulon.

5. *Aberdeen-Gothenburg Route*

A direct line between Great Britain and Sweden was proposed by the British Red Cross as early as September 1941. Aberdeen had been selected in view of its good communications with the interior. It was not until the autumn of 1944, however, that the German authorities accepted this plan in principle, on condition that the ships, on their return passage, should carry mail and parcels for German PW. Their uncompromising attitude moreover prevented any agreement being reached before March 1945 on the choice, status and conditions of charter of such vessels. The first shipment of relief from Aberdeen did not therefore reach Gothenburg until after the armistice.

6. *Gothenburg-Lübeck Route*

Events in the Mediterranean theatre of war at first led the ICRC to consider linking the United States direct with Germany by the north. The British Government and the owners of vessels chartered by the Foundation objected, however, to this idea, on account of the dangers referred to above. In default of other routes, it was decided to ship relief supplies to Gothenburg, whence it was hoped to convey them to Germany via Denmark by the Helsingborg-Elsinore ferry. This service was irregular, however, and the ICRC attempted to set up a coastal shuttle service between Sweden and Germany.

This service could not be opened until November 1944. The belligerents had chosen the port of Lübeck, despite the danger of destruction by bombing. Since the Allies had refused safe-conducts to these Swedish vessels, the ICRC did not provide them with the Red Cross emblem, or place their convoying agents on board, for no responsibility for this service could be assumed in these conditions. The ICRC delegates did, however, supervise the loading and discharging of goods and their forwarding to the camps in Germany. The Swedish Government asked that the cargo-boats should at least be painted white,

and that their sailings should be notified in advance by the ICRC to the British and Russian diplomatic representatives in Stockholm. In the absence of safe-conducts, the Swedish Government accepted declarations from the belligerents to the effect that the vessels would be respected as far as possible.

Despite these restricted guarantees, the Swedish boats, up to the Armistice, made twenty-seven trips without incident. At the end of April 1945, two of the ships took off at Lübeck about a thousand people released from concentration camps. Shortly after the end of hostilities, the Lübeck service was given up, but the ICRC delegation in Gothenburg remained in their post, at the request of the Red Cross Societies concerned, to cooperate with them in clearing stocks. These were forwarded to France, Belgium, Finland, Poland and Germany.

7. Projected Near East Route

The occupation of the Balkans by Axis forces made communications with the Near East both difficult and precarious. Great delays and losses attended the transport of parcels to Axis PW and civilian internees in countries overseas, and the conveyance of supplies from India, Egypt, Turkey and Syria. To rectify this situation and to promote the despatch of urgent relief supplies to the 3,000 British PW held in Greece, the ICRC attempted to put a line in operation between Turkey and the Adriatic, similar to that between Lisbon and Marseilles. After some hesitation, the belligerents, at the beginning of 1942, agreed to this plan in principle. Unfortunately, none of the vessels the ICRC wished to place in service were approved by all the Governments concerned, and since railway communications had meanwhile been re-opened, the scheme was abandoned.

8. Projected Far East Route

An account of the Committee's attempts to organize the sea transport of relief supplies to Allied PW in Japanese hands will be found in the chapter covering all the problems of the war in the Far East¹.

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 437 et seq.

9. *Maritime Transport of Relief for Civilian Populations*

The results achieved by the ICRC in the sphere of maritime transport of relief supplies for civilian populations are set out below. Details are given, in particular, of transports from Turkey, Egypt and Palestine to Greece, from Lisbon to the Channel Islands and to the Netherlands, and finally from Turkey to the Dodecanese.

¹ See pp. 401 et seq.

Chapter 2

Railway Transport

Up to the middle of 1940, the railways worked normally in Western and Central Europe, so that relief supplies could be sent to PW and internees of both parties by the ordinary mail service across the countries at war. This was so in particular of parcels sent by post from any part of the world to Polish PW, and to French and British PW and internees in Germany.

After the occupation in 1940 of Norway, Belgium, Holland and part of France, followed in 1941 by that of Yugoslavia and Greece, the number of PW increased considerably. The ICRC itself then had to solve the problems raised by the rail transport of the collective and individual relief consignments required for such large numbers of men.

The forwarding of individual and especially family parcels will be discussed later. Throughout the war such parcels were sent chiefly through the post office ; the ICRC was therefore not concerned with them. It did, however, take repeated steps to assure the despatch of individual parcels in mail bags or cases, of anonymous parcels having no particular addressee, and of goods in bulk.

Up to the beginning of 1944, the German and French railway systems were more or less intact, but requisitions by the German military authorities in Germany and in the occupied countries led to a shortage of rolling stock. Thus, from the time of the Franco-German armistice in 1940, the daily civilian train which should have connected Hendaye and Paris never ran ; in fact, the regular use of this line was confined to military transports. As a result, parcels sent through the Army post offices

to German PW held in the British Commonwealth were accepted, but the reverse did not hold good. Relief supplies for Allied PW shipped by the American, Argentine, British, Brazilian, Canadian and other Red Cross Societies had, therefore, to be sent by another itinerary, proposed as early as 1940 by the ICRC ; this was by the sea route from Lisbon to Marseilles or Genoa, and thence by rail to Switzerland. This route was increasingly used until the end of the war, except for a few months in 1944, after the Allied landing in the South of France.

Relief supplies to PW in Europe were carried largely by the French, Italian, Swiss, German, Hungarian and Balkan railway systems. Although conditions were often most difficult, the railway staff everywhere showed a devotion to duty which earned the gratitude of the ICRC and the donor agencies.

The many problems of railway transport will be discussed under the following four headings :—

- (a) Organization ;
- (b) Shortage of rolling stock ;
- (c) Application of provisions for free transport ;
- (d) Looting, accidents and petty theft.

(a) *Organization*

At first, the ICRC commissioned international transport firms to attend to the receipt and despatch of goods sent to PW through its agency. After a few months this system proved too costly. Without entirely dispensing with the services of international shipping agencies, the ICRC set up its own Transport Department. As this was not a commercial undertaking, expenses were much reduced (from 1942 to 1946 they were no higher than 4.5 centimes per kilogram) ; more important, the consignments sent to PW and internees of all categories shared the privileges enjoyed by the Committee itself.

Shortly after setting up this railway transport central office, the ICRC opened similar offices at the headquarters of certain delegations, one or several of whose staff were assigned to transport formalities. Those delegations that only occasionally had duties of this kind continued to employ the local transport agents.

(b) *Shortage of wagons*

Box cars in good condition, with a load capacity of seven to twenty tons and utilizable over the whole European network, were required. As supplies arrived irregularly in Switzerland, applications for rolling stock could not be satisfactorily met within the required time limits. From the outset therefore, consignments were hampered by a persistent lack of freight cars.

In view of the neutrality of Switzerland, the Federal Railways soon prohibited the despatch abroad of single cars. On being refused a request for one or several lifts of wagons, the ICRC proposed that rolling stock should be supplied to the Foundation for Red Cross Transports. After consultation with the Swiss Government, the Federal Railways again refused, but promised that if negotiations with the French and Italian State Railways failed, they would consider the temporary loan of Swiss wagons then at Marseilles or Genoa.

At the same time, it was impossible to obtain sufficient French or Italian wagons when Red Cross ships reached Marseilles or Genoa, nor enough German wagons to take the goods from Switzerland to the PW camps in Germany. In the absence of a remedy, the ICRC had to make constant applications to the various railway managements; in spite of these efforts, its relief service was seriously menaced on more than one occasion. There were three periods of acute crisis :

(1). The first occurred during the winter of 1940-41 and lasted until spring ; it affected traffic from Marseilles to Geneva, and from Singen into Germany. The organization difficulties which had provoked the crisis having been overcome, the volume of transport became fairly stable as from the winter of 1942-43 and showed the following monthly averages : 1,000 to 1,800 wagons received, 1,000 to 1,200 sent to Germany, and 100 to 300 to Italy and the Balkans.

As most of the relief goods entrusted to the ICRC were destined for Germany, the despatch office at the frontier station of Singen was of primary importance. Technical details were finally settled under an agreement with the German Red Cross

in September and October 1943. The German Railways then announced that the goods would be directed over sixteen sectors of their network. Consequently, the ICRC had to set up a composition department. As consignments for single camps did not always make up a full wagon-load, the German Railways had agreed to accept single wagons of not less than five tons weight and addressed to several camps in the same neighbourhood. In such cases all the addressees had to be entered on the way-bill and the customs declaration, and the various lots so marked that they could without difficulty be unloaded separately.

All the parcels in one car were numbered according to a system which allowed the ICRC to keep a statistical record.

On the 12th and 25th of each month, despatch schedules for the following fortnight had to be sent to the German Railways. As goods arrived in Switzerland irregularly, however, the ICRC schedules made a distinction between those shipments which were "definite" and those which were "probable" or "doubtful". The cars were of course loaded in conformity with customs regulations. Each was placed under bond; the seals of the wagons were numbered, and the numbers were entered on the document.

The same procedure applied to the so-called "composite" cars containing separate consignments for more than two or three camps. Consignments of this kind were loaded in the same car for transport to the German station at Singen, where they were re-loaded for direct forwarding to the addressees. This system, although less reliable than previous arrangements, was the only way of sending relief supplies to isolated groups of PW who could not receive their parcels through a large camp.

Every "composite" car had to have a way-bill made out for Singen by the Committee's Despatch Department, and another for each constituent consignment. As many as 20 or 30 way-bills were thus needed, in addition to the customs declarations, manifests, etc., making in all eleven documents for each consignment. Special forms were used by arrangement with the Swiss and German Customs and Railways. An agreement was signed with the Swiss Railways for the loading of the

cars in the warehouses, since cars had often to be loaded successively in four or five warehouses (e.g. Geneva-Cornavin for medical stores, Geneva-La Renfile for clothing from France, Vallorbe for foodstuffs from overseas, Bienne for the toilet articles sorted there, etc.).

"Composite" despatches were maintained until the summer of 1944, that is, until normal traffic in Germany broke down. At that point, these consignments suffered such losses that the method had to be abandoned.

Combined loading on the same cars of supplies intended for PW of various nationalities was increasingly aided by the standardization of overseas parcels; thus, repeated loading and the despatch of single cases to small detachments of PW were avoided.

The Committee's shipments followed the six principal methods shown below.

(a) *Full cars; one or more loadings.* — These were intended for PW of the same nationality and the same camp (including subsidiary labour detachments, infirmaries and hospitals). This was the most reliable method and was applied as often as possible.

(b) *Combined cars; one lading.* — These cars were sealed; they contained supplies taken from one warehouse and were sent to PW of several nationalities in the same camp.

(c) *Combined cars; several loadings.* — These were also sealed; they carried goods taken from several warehouses and were sent to PW of different nationalities held in the same camp.

(d) *Combined cars routed indirectly; one lading.* — These remained sealed until they reached their first destination; they carried supplies from one warehouse and for PW of different nationalities in two or three camps in the same railway sector.

(e) *Combined cars routed indirectly; several loadings.* — These also remained sealed until they reached their first destination; they contained goods from several warehouses for PW of different nationalities held in two or three camps in the same railway sector.

(f) "*Composite*" cars. — These were sent to Singen and contained separate consignments. This system was only used in the last resort.

The above procedures also applied, with a few modifications, to shipments for Italy and other countries. They ensured the fullest possible use of the available rolling stock.

(2) In 1943, the Committee's railway transport passed through a second critical period, chiefly as regards transport to Germany. Up to that time, the ICRC had been able to secure numbers of German wagons, and a fair number of Italian, French and other cars, mainly owing to the volume of commercial traffic between Germany and Italy by way of the Brenner and the St. Gothard. The Swiss Federal Railways were then able to provide the ICRC with German empties returning from Italy through the St. Gothard. In the spring of 1943 difficulties arose, as the result of the air raids on the stations of Milan, Bologna, Verona and Rome. After the capitulation of Italy, the number of German wagons crossing Switzerland became steadily less, and there were no Italian cars available at all. This was at the same time a period of unprecedented need for rolling stock, as thousands of Allied prisoners were being transferred to Germany.

At a conference held in Berne, in November 1943, it was found that the shipment of Christmas parcels alone to all the Allied prisoners in Germany would require 1,300 wagons. The Federal Railways could, however, only provide a few dozen. In face of this serious situation, the ICRC urged the Allied Red Cross Societies to send rolling stock to assist in maintaining the supply of relief to Allied PW. It had already made similar appeals, first in 1940 to the British Red Cross, at the time when this Society was establishing its relief programme, and again in 1941, when the ICRC advised the representative of the American Red Cross to make plans for sending American freight-cars, in the event of relief supplies from the United States arriving in still greater quantities.

In 1943, warnings of a possible collapse of the railway transport system in Germany could not be given officially by the

Committee, since Geneva was not entitled to express its views regarding the issue of the war. The ICRC had therefore to confine itself to private talks with the American, British and Canadian Red Cross. A representative of the ICRC was sent to these three important contributing Societies, to propose that wagons and motor-trucks should be supplied against the day when the means of transport of the Detaining Power completely failed.

These negotiations were unsuccessful, and as before, the ICRC had to rely wholly on German rolling stock. The confusion which followed the armistice in Italy was, it is true, of short duration, and the situation improved slightly by the end of 1943. Nevertheless, from November 1943 to July 1944, the despatch schedule of supplies was delayed by about two months, on an average. This situation righted itself later, when from June to October shipments from overseas ceased entirely, as the result of the Allied landing in France¹, while shipments from Switzerland to Germany between June and November averaged 900 wagons monthly.

(3) In November 1944, a third rail transport crisis occurred and this lasted until the close of hostilities. During this period, the steadily increasing air attacks on the German railway system, in particular on the lines leading to the marshalling yards at Cassel, Leipzig, Berlin and Munich, immobilized or destroyed tens of thousands of wagons; in addition, they caused the loss of loads standing in these yards. The consequences were soon felt in Geneva; owing to the lack of rolling stock, the number of consignments fell rapidly and in December 1944 there was an arrears of 1,700 wagons. In October, supplies from overseas arrived again in Switzerland through the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, which had both been hastily repaired. The line from Marseilles to Geneva, through Lyons, became a bottle-neck, as more than five ships had unloaded simultaneously at Marseilles. In Switzerland, the Committee's warehouses were full, and it was not easy to find other storage room for the mass

¹ See p. 159.

of supplies arriving in American wagons which had to be returned to France within twenty-four hours of their arrival.

On the other hand, the situation of the PW and internees daily became worse, since in view of the concentric attack on the Reich itself, they were being transferred from the frontier districts to the interior of the country. The ICRC dispatched a representative to Berlin, to make a last effort to obtain as many German wagons as possible. In December 1944, the German Railways promised to put 1,000 wagons at the immediate disposal of the ICRC. Despite their undoubted goodwill, the competent authorities were unable to keep their word : instead of one thousand, they supplied only a few dozen.

The earlier negotiations with the American, British and Canadian Red Cross Societies now bore fruit, the more so as the Allied Governments felt the need for quick action, if their nationals in Germany were to be saved. These Governments and Red Cross Societies, after consultation with the Transport Division of the Allied High Command, agreed to put rolling stock at the disposal of the ICRC : the American, Canadian and Polish Red Cross Societies undertook to supply motor-trucks¹, while the Belgian and French Governments promised railway wagons.

The ICRC thereupon drew up a scheme, based on the nationality and number of PW in Germany, the rate of issue desired by the donors, and the stocks available in Switzerland. The Committee asked for at least 2,460 wagons, as from the end of December 1944, or the beginning of January 1945. In February 1945, the French Railways furnished 247 wagons, and the Belgian Railways 71, instead of the promised initial deliveries of 300 and 100 respectively. The remainder was to be delivered by March, but in the meantime the course of events was hastened, and the ICRC would in any case have been unable to use the total number requested.

With regard to these contributions by the French and Belgian Governments mention should be made of the " block-trains ".

¹ See p. 186.

In 1942 a considerable stock of French material was awaiting shipping space at Lisbon, and the ICRC, together with the French Government and Red Cross, conceived the idea of forwarding it by "block-trains".

The representative of the French Red Cross at Lisbon, acting in agreement with the Committee's delegation in that town, assembled complete lifts of 20 to 25 wagons for the use of the ICRC, and arranged for their dispatch from Port-Bou to Geneva. Timely use was thus made of supplies which otherwise would have been greatly delayed through lack of shipping space in the Mediterranean. Sixteen "block-trains" ran from Lisbon to Geneva; this very costly scheme was abandoned when navigation in the Mediterranean again became normal.

At the beginning of 1945 the camps in North, East, West and Central Germany, as well as those in Upper and Lower Austria, could no longer be reached by rail, owing to the close proximity of the combat areas. The ICRC had therefore to continue its use of railways for transport to Southern Germany (Baden, Wurtemberg and Bavaria), and Western Austria (Vorarlberg and the Tyrol). Here foodstuffs and medicaments were the more urgently required, as the Detaining Power had removed large numbers of PW to these areas and could no longer give them their regular basic rations. The ICRC thereupon decided to send "block-trains" of 20 or 25 wagons each to supply these camps and to build up stocks which could be sent by road to camps near the zone of operations.

The French and Belgian wagons were registered by the Swiss Federal Railways; they were marked "Private: International Committee of the Red Cross" and "Freight for Prisoners of War only". In view of the danger of air attack, the wagons were painted white all over, to distinguish them from the German rolling stock; in addition, they displayed the Red Cross emblem and, with the permission of the Swiss Government, the Swiss Federal Cross.

As the registration of French and Belgian rolling stock was delayed, the ICRC borrowed two lifts of 50 Swiss wagons from the Federal Railways in February 1945; these were used to form "block-trains" until wagons from abroad became available.

The 186 "block-trains" which the ICRC was able to organize were used chiefly to carry supplies to:

(a) the warehouse at Ratisbon. From here, lorries took supplies to camps in Wurtemberg and Baden, and also to the North, towards the convoys of PW on the march from Silesia and Saxony.

(b) Stalag VII A, at Moosburg, near Munich, where the German authorities had assembled nearly 100,000 Allied PW.

(c) Vorarlberg and the Tyrol, where PW and civilian internees from Italy and Upper and Lower Austria were converging¹.

(c) *Arrangements for free carriage.*

As a general rule, the Committee's consignments to PW, and by analogy, to civilian war victims, were eligible for free carriage under Art. 38 of the Convention. This privilege was granted by the Swiss Federal Railways, and the German, Italian², Yugoslav, Greek and Hungarian State railways.

The position was more complicated in countries where the railways belonged to private companies.

Negotiations with the French National Railways in this connexion were particularly important. Not only were nearly all shipments from North and South America to Central Europe directed across France, but the French *départements* all despatched large quantities of relief goods to Switzerland, for onward carriage to French PW in Germany. The movement of supplies in the reverse direction was no less heavy, as the ICRC forwarded considerable relief consignments from Switzerland to the camps for Allied PW, civilian internees and others in France; in addition, the shipments which the Committee sent on behalf of the German Red Cross to its delegations overseas had to cross French territory.

¹ To this end, the ICRC set up a large depot of foodstuffs at Landeck, at the end of the Arlberg tunnel; road transport left from here for the East. This depot was also used for the feeding of PW in transit.

² As no official confirmation was given by the Director-General of the Italian Railways, the Committee was obliged, throughout the war, to negotiate with district managers and stationmasters in order to secure the application of Art. 38 in each particular case.

It was in the interest of the German authorities to facilitate the transport of relief goods, both for their nationals in enemy hands and for the PW whom they held. Accordingly, they placed no obstacle in the way of the negotiations between the ICRC and the Vichy Government. The authorities at Vichy, who were naturally anxious about the fate of French PW in Germany, were unwilling to incur carriage charges for the supplies they despatched in conjunction with the French Red Cross, or which they received from overseas for relief purposes. To avoid amending the statutes of the French Railways, they set up a government organization called the *Comité de la reconnaissance française*, whose duty it was to refund expenses of this kind to the French railway system. Meanwhile, the ICRC, acting as intermediary between the belligerents and their nationals held in PW camps, had already established the principle of equal treatment in this respect for PW of all nationalities. For that reason, the Vichy Government, when discussing free carriage, did not even refer to the possibility of discrimination between relief supplies for French PW and for Allied PW of other nationalities. The French authorities realized, moreover, that concessions on bulk shipments from the British Red Cross would facilitate the grant by the blockade authorities of the navicerts and landcerts required for the relief goods they wished to send from overseas, or from Portugal, to French PW.

No controversy arose in this connection until the close of hostilities. Large quantities of relief supplies, warehoused in Switzerland, were then returned to the donors, since they could not be sent to Germany. The cost of their transport by the French railways was claimed, not from the *Comité de la reconnaissance française*, but from the French Red Cross, which in turn requested reimbursement from the ICRC. Finally, the donors, after discussions with the Committee, agreed to meet these costs, as they concerned goods which were returned to them. On this occasion, the Ministry for War in Paris agreed to bear the carriage charges for the relief supplies sent by the ICRC to German PW in France.

The technical features of rail transport dealt with above relate only to European countries ; in others, where the transport

system continued to work normally, there was no need for the ICRC to intervene. The question of free carriage was, however, a different matter. The principle of reciprocity required that this facility, already accorded to relief supplies for Allied PW in the hands of the Axis Powers, should apply also for consignments to German and Italian PW even when conveyed by private railway companies.

The matter was of slight importance until 1943 ; before that date, the numbers of PW from the Axis countries were relatively low, and the small quantities addressed to them could be sent by post. In 1943, however, the German Red Cross made large consignments of uniforms, games, books, Christmas presents and other goods, while the Italian Red Cross sent considerable quantities of medicaments. The ICRC thereupon applied to the Governments and railway companies in Great Britain, Canada, India, South Africa and Turkey, and to the Government and Red Cross of the United States, for the carriage of these supplies under the terms of Article 38 also.

Great Britain granted the free transport requested. The United States, whose railways are under private ownership, did likewise, whilst stating that the cost of transport, including the unloading and transit through Canada, would be refunded by the American Red Cross. The Governments of the British Dominions and India also fell in with the wishes of the ICRC.

On the other hand, the many attempts made to obtain free transport on the Turkish Railways unfortunately remained unavailing. From the outset a variety of difficulties attended the transit of cases of medicaments and Christmas parcels for German and Italian PW in Egypt, Palestine, India and the Near East. These goods had in fact to pass through Turkey to Mersina, whence they were shipped to their destination, but were often held up at that port. When the German and Italian Red Cross learned of these delays, they ceased to send collective parcels in cases and returned to the system of parcel post.

(d) *Looting, Accidents and Petty Theft.*

Thefts and looting, although unimportant in relation to the volume of goods, were during the period of war itself so

common that it would be tedious, and indeed impossible, to enumerate them in detail. Their frequency varied with the progress of the war. During relatively quiet periods, the ICRC departments and the consignees were able to exercise a fairly efficient supervision. But when military operations disorganized an area which the supplies had to cross in transit, or in which they were to be distributed, losses were inevitable, despite all the precautions taken. It is not therefore surprising that after 1940 the number rose steadily.

Losses through theft, looting or accident were of different kinds.

(1). Thefts might be committed by the persons packing the parcels, cases or bales. They were negligible in the case of goods sent by national Red Cross Societies, whose workers were under strict discipline. When the supplies were dispatched by less well-organized agencies, or when they came from countries impoverished by the war, a comparison between the weights given by the donors and those of the goods received generally showed appreciable discrepancies.

(2). Thefts also occurred during transport by rail and in the ordinary post. These increased from 1941 to 1945, as certain commodities became scarcer in the countries of origin.

(3). Goods were pilfered or damaged in the shipping ports. These losses were relatively small, as the ports were usually under military supervision.

(4). Losses during sea transport itself were also small and were usually due to accident rather than to dishonesty.

(5). Risks were, however, greater during unloading in harbour, especially when the port had been damaged or partially destroyed by bombardment, which made supervision more difficult.

(6). Thefts during transit through neutral countries were negligible.

(7). Difficult problems were raised by the theft, looting and confiscation of goods in the detaining countries. Whenever a loss was reported by the camp leader or by a PW, endless

discussions ensued. It was indeed not easy to identify the culprits, since the thefts might have occurred in many circumstances :

(a) Most frequently during carriage by railway in the detaining countries ;

(b) At a time when the wagons were stationary and being opened at the rail depot attached to a main camp ;

(c) During the unloading and the storing of goods in premises of varying suitability, usually situated at some distance from the camp ;

(d) During transport to camp annexes, hospitals, etc ;

(e) During transport to labour detachments. Many camps had several hundreds of these detachments ; one even possessed 1,400 ;

(f) At the destination, where thefts might be committed by PW other than the consignees, or by the camp guard.

As a rule, enquiry into isolated thefts shed no light on the matter. Satisfactory results were only secured when the ICRC was able to prove that the loss had occurred during transport by rail, since the railways were then responsible and were obliged to make good the value of the loss.

Enquiries were effective only in cases of repeated theft. The contents of the wagons and the weight and number of parcels were verified at the time of despatch ; a check was also made by the camp leader, a stationmaster or the individual consignee. These checks sometimes made it possible to discover at least the place where the losses occurred, after which they were often reduced and even stopped by appropriate security measures.

The ICRC had only two means of discovering losses :

(a) by comparing the weight of the goods received with that shown on consignment notes ;

(b) by checking the receipts of the camp leaders or individual consignees.

From January 1, 1942 (the date from which statistics of this kind were kept) until February 1945 (on which date con-

signments according to nationality were replaced by so-called "pooled" shipments), the ICRC received receipts for 91.888% of the goods sent into belligerent countries. During this period the percentage of goods on which receipts were not returned rose to 8.115%, whereas it has been only 0.48% in 1941. This considerable increase may be attributed to the growing dislocation in Europe at the end of the war.

The proportion of 8.115% was the absolute maximum of unreturned receipts. It may be supposed, however, that a certain number of receipt forms (attached to way-bills and customs declarations) did not reach the consignees, and that the others, once signed, were lost in the post. The true losses could therefore not have amounted to more than 4-5%. In addition, the transfer of PW and of entire camps, and the recovery of consignments which had been only partly rifled, also prevented the ICRC from establishing any precise facts.

At all events, the following conclusions may be drawn from these facts.

(1). Losses were inevitable in view of the scarcity of goods caused by the war, and the risks to which transport was exposed in belligerent countries, mainly owing to military operations. These losses varied between one and ten per cent, according to the phase of the war and the circumstances in which the relief supplies were forwarded and distributed.

(2). Losses remained at a relatively low level for collective consignments sent in sealed full wagons, and for cases or standard parcels. It was far higher for individual parcels, the supervision of which was more difficult owing to the variety of packings and addresses.

(3). The ICRC regularly informed the donors of losses, and also drew their attention to the risks. Donors were moreover notified when the losses exceeded 10% during carriage through any given country and were asked whether, in spite of this, they wished to continue sending goods at their own risk. As a rule, the donors assented.

DESPATCH OF GIFTS BY POST

Although problems relating to the despatch of postal packages often arose, and were solved in conjunction with those concerning mail in general, some special difficulties also occurred. These only will be considered here.

The forwarding of postal packages intended for PW and civilian internees was one of the most important matters before the ICRC throughout the war, firstly, because the parcel post afforded easy and rapid distribution of packages to individual addressees, and secondly, because the free carriage of postal packages was guaranteed by the World Postal Convention signed in Cairo in 1935. This Convention however, could obviously make no provision for the technical problems inherent in the bulk consignment of relief to PW under Art. 38 of the Geneva Convention. These were problems which the ICRC could solve only in close collaboration with the national postal authorities members of the World Postal Union. When any two countries go to war, their direct postal intercommunication is automatically cut. However, since relief supplies were guaranteed to PW, and as most categories of civilian internees eventually shared this benefit, the postal authorities of the countries at war attempted to maintain a regular service through the postal machinery of neutral countries. Thus the transport of postal packages on the continent of Europe depended to a large extent on Portugal, Switzerland and Turkey.

After the Franco-German armistice in 1940, the ICRC was faced with the task of re-establishing the postal connection between Portugal and Switzerland. It was urgently necessary to forward the postal packages which had accumulated in the British General Post Office, from Lisbon to Germany and Italy. In order to retain the advantage of postal transmission as far as possible, the following arrangements were followed.

The parcels held up in Lisbon were put in mail-bags and handed over to the delegation of the ICRC by the Post Office. They were thus temporarily withdrawn from the postal circuit and, in agreement with the British Red Cross, were sent to Marseilles; the delegation of the ICRC there forwarded the

parcels to Switzerland in the same way as non-postal consignments, but with post office forms instead of the usual consignment notes. Once in Switzerland, they re-entered the international postal circuit, for the Swiss Post Office forwarded them to Germany and Italy by the ordinary postal channels. This method of semi-postal transmission was maintained until December 1944, when the German railway system was put out of action by the Allied air-raids.

This channel of communication from Western to Central Europe was first used for the bulk shipments of the British General Post Office, and later for those of the Western Hemisphere (Canada, United States, Latin America and the West Coast of Africa), amounting in all to three or four thousand mail-bags a month. Postal packages sent from North Africa to Europe continued to go by the sea route between the French colonies and France itself, which was in fairly regular use until the Allied landing of November 1942 in North Africa¹.

Postal packages sent to or from the South-East of Europe, the Near East and India had to pass through the Turkish postal system. This traffic consisted of parcels sent in one direction from Italy and Germany to PW and civilian internees in Egypt, Palestine, East Africa and India, and in the other from Allied organizations in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Turkey to PW and civilian internees held in Italy and Germany. The postal authorities sent considerable quantities of goods by this route, which was cut for a few months in 1941, owing to military operations in the Balkans: it was later in use again provisionally, and finally opened to regular traffic from October 1941 until the summer of 1944.

Through the receipts and reports sent to it by the camp leaders, the ICRC had a direct check on the collective consignments sent through its care. A check on the arrival of postal packages in the camps, hospitals and prisons, however, could only be made indirectly and was limited to a count of the individual receipts attached to these parcels. At the request of the

¹ From the month of December 1944, the ICRC was able to despatch postal packages for German PW held in North Africa from Geneva to Toulon, by its own transport.

ICRC, the National Red Cross Societies sent in statistics at regular intervals, showing the quantity and sometimes the serial numbers of the consignments, as well as the percentage of receipts returned after a reasonable lapse of time. It was thus able to take action when delays and losses exceeded the proportion considered normal in time of war. Delays were due either to congestion in the ports such as Lisbon, Aleppo and Mersina ¹, or to the accumulation of goods at the censorship offices. In the first case, the ICRC was, as a rule, able to improve matters by applying to the shipowners and charterers, as well as to Governments who might put shipping space at its disposal. In the second case, however, it had to content itself with making recommendations to the Detaining Power. The problem of theft became still more complicated, as mentioned above ².

¹ In April 1943, the Istambul-Mersina line was opened in place of the Istambul-Aleppo line.

² The consignments of postal packages were all the more difficult to control because parcels forwarded carriage free are not entered separately on postal forms, or registered. In consequence, no separate enquiry was possible concerning them.

Chapter 3

Road Transport

(1). *General Survey*

The work of relief was dependent on transport facilities not only by sea and rail, but also by road. The latter even became a major problem after the Allied landing in France. In the reigning total disorder, a transport system capable of supplying food for the millions of detainees in Germany, facing starvation in the camps or on the roads, had to be established within a few weeks. The only way in which the ICRC could reach them was, besides a few "block-trains", by means of fleets of motor-trucks. Earlier, however, the Committee had already been active in this field, as the following brief details will show.

Portugal-Switzerland. — On the occupation of France and until its liberation, the ICRC several times studied the possibility of communication by road with Lisbon. This idea was abandoned, because the Committee's ships sailing between Lisbon and Marseilles were able to meet all requirements. Moreover, road transport from Portugal to Switzerland would have been very difficult and expensive ; it was thought preferable to keep it in reserve, in case other means failed.

Italy. — After the Italian armistice, the dispatch of relief to the North and Centre of Italy, which were still in the hands of the Axis, became a very hazardous matter. The Committee's representatives in Rome and Ponte San Pietro (near Milan) needed vehicles to convey relief to the camps. Instead of sending lorries from Switzerland or buying them in Italy, the ICRC first applied to the German military authorities responsible

for the maintenance of the PW. As this request was not granted, the ICRC, in April 1944, prepared to send truck-loads of foodstuffs to Rome, but this the German Command refused to allow. The ICRC was reduced to sending a trailer to its representative in Ponte San Pietro, who already had a car, and it was not until a year later that the delegates received the vehicles they required.

Greece. — In Greece, the representatives of the ICRC also needed motor-trucks for the distribution of relief supplies to Allied PW and to the war-disabled of the Greek Army, but these vehicles could not be taken from the park held by the Managing Commission for the feeding of the civilian population¹. The ICRC then applied to the Greek War Relief in New-York, which sent four trucks of Canadian origin for the exclusive use of the ICRC. These trucks were returned to the Greek War Relief in Athens when they were no longer required.

France and Germany. — Later, it will be seen how the steps taken by the ICRC to transport overseas relief supplies by road from the Mediterranean to Switzerland enabled it to build up a large fleet of vehicles. These were used in 1945 for conveying food to the camps in Germany. A road service of this kind had already been contemplated in 1943, when the German railway system began to deteriorate. In May 1943, at the request of the British Red Cross, the ICRC asked the German Government to authorize the transport of relief supplies in lorries driven by Swiss personnel.

It was then planned to create a food-depot at Singen, on German territory, and a park of vehicles in Switzerland. The scheme was to carry supplies by rail to Singen ; at the end of each trip into Germany the trucks would have been serviced in Switzerland before proceeding to Singen for a fresh load. This service would have partially ensured the food-supply of camps within a radius of 500 kilometres.

¹ See pp. 450 et seq.

The ICRC requested the British Red Cross to supply the lorries and sent a representative to Great Britain and the United States to discuss the matter with the Red Cross Societies of these countries. In the meantime, it asked the Swiss Army Command for permission to use Swiss trucks, and sought the consent of the German Government. The ICRC counted on Germany's supplying the fuel, in return for the trucks which it would save in this way. But the German Command informed the ICRC that it had not sufficient oil or fuel for these vehicles ; other arrangements therefore had to be sought.

(2). *Supply of equipment to the ICRC.*

A. *Lorries.*

Foreseeing an interruption of rail traffic in the Rhone Valley, the ICRC in May 1944 proposed to the American Red Cross that motor-trucks be sent to Europe, and asked the United States Legation in Berne to support this motion. Shortly afterwards, the Ministry of Economic Warfare expressed a desire for a road service between Portugal and Switzerland. The ICRC then addressed a definite request for thirty trucks to the American Red Cross. This request was approved, but the ARC advised the Committee in the meantime to use Swiss or Spanish vehicles, for which the U.S.A would supply the tyres, fuel and oil. The ICRC then asked the Spanish Government for the temporary loan of about fifty vehicles, and some fuel. But neither Spain nor Switzerland could offer any lorries.

Meanwhile, the supplies for Switzerland and the ICRC were already awaiting transport from Marseilles to Geneva, and the ICRC made arrangements with the Swiss authorities to convey them to Geneva, in addition to the relief supplies waiting at Lyons. Unfortunately, the vehicles which could have been lent by the French Red Cross were useless owing to lack of fuel, and the Swiss Army Command could not spare some 50 gas-producer lorries requested for this purpose, in view of the military operations going on near the Swiss frontier.

First delivery of trucks. — Shortly afterwards, the Department of State in Washington announced that 50 trucks had

been sent. The first 26 were shipped on the *Caritas I*, and landed at Barcelona on September 20. These heavy trucks, with ten wheels and a capacity of eight tons, were not able to reach the Spanish frontier with their loads until three months later. A great many formalities and lengthy negotiations were required before the vehicles could be handed over to the ICRC and allowed to take the road. The visas required to enable the Swiss drivers to take over these vehicles were not granted until the end of November.

In the meantime, twenty-three more American vehicles had arrived at Marseilles on the *Caritas II* on October 20, and the fiftieth truck reached Toulon on November 9, on the *Henry Dunant*. To begin with, they were used for a shuttle service between the port of Toulon and the warehouses.

By an agreement signed on September 29, 1944, these trucks were handed over to the ICRC for the transport of PW parcels, after which they were to be returned to the American Red Cross. This Society also assumed all operation expenses and maintenance.

The Canadian Red Cross in its turn offered about 50 three-ton trucks, then in England. These vehicles were loaded by the British Red Cross on the *Silver Oak* and reached Toulon at the end of November.

At the beginning of February 1945, all the vehicles supplied by the USA and Canada were in the hands of the ICRC in Geneva, except 24 American trucks, which for a time were used by the Committee's warehouses at Toulon.

The ICRC had originally intended all these vehicles for the transport to Switzerland of the relief supplies unloaded in Portugal or on the Mediterranean. But when the lorries arrived at Geneva, the situation had completely changed. The Committee's ships were again calling at the southern French ports, and from there to Switzerland the railways were sufficiently repaired for a resumption of traffic. On the other hand, the disorganisation of transport in Germany was so great that it threatened to halt the flow of relief to the interior of the country. In January 1945, the German authorities made no further objection to the entry of Red Cross motor convoys to German

territory. The ICRC thus found itself suddenly faced by an unprecedented task, far surpassing its material resources : the "block-trains" it was able to organize on certain sectors, and the hundred or so trucks at its disposal, were quite inadequate.

Northern Germany. — At that time help was not sent from Switzerland alone. After the opening of the maritime route in the North, Lübeck had become the relief-centre for Northern Germany. The Committee's representative in that town was therefore also in urgent need of vehicles in order to transport food to the camps in Prussia. The ICRC could however only make about thirty trucks available to that sector, since the remainder were absolutely essential for its work in South Germany and Austria. The American Red Cross then sent direct to the Committee's representative in Lübeck the trucks which it was able to purchase in Sweden. About fifty of these vehicles were thus transported to Lübeck, in April, on Red Cross ships; moreover, about sixty trucks from America were unloaded there in May.

Meanwhile the Committee's representative in Lübeck had tried to organize a service of motor-barges. These would have navigated the Elbe, to points near the camps (for example, Brandenburg), and from there the trucks would have carried the supplies to their destination. But this plan fell through when the Elbe was cut by the Allied advance.

In February the Allied High Command placed one hundred American Army trucks at the disposal of the ICRC, together with fuel. The convoy reached Geneva from Paris on March 12.

Not only had prisoners to be fed, but deportees had to be helped and repatriated. As a large number of these were French, the French Government requisitioned about a hundred vehicles for the ICRC, of which the latter received 97. When it asked for more, the French Government was unable to comply, but promised to make good to the Swiss Government any tyres and fuel which the latter might advance to the ICRC for the transport of repatriated persons.

In response to the Committee's request for motor coaches, with which to transport repatriates, the Swiss Army Command

offered 28 coaches with an aggregate capacity of 600 to 700 persons. Later on, the Swiss Motor-Owners' Association offered some fifty vehicles, for which, however, the fuel was to be found by the Committee. The ICRC then asked the Allied Command for permission to use the fuel which had hitherto been reserved for the transport of PW, and took the further step on May 11 of requesting the Swiss Army Command to lend it some petrol. These steps were however unsuccessful, and the plan for using the Swiss coaches had to be abandoned.

In March 1945, the YMCA placed twelve trucks at the disposal of the ICRC. Ten three-ton trucks were also received from the Polish Red Cross. These reached Geneva from England on March 21.

In April, thirteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons trucks were sent from the American depot at Vitrolles to the Committee's representative at Toulon, for the local service.

Again in April, the American Red Cross supplied fifty more trucks of a type similar to those which it had sent in the autumn of 1944, and five motor-cars.

The Italian Red Cross offered sixty Italian lorries, immobilized in Switzerland. It could however, not make use of them, because they were claimed by the Italian Army.

Altogether 474 vehicles and 137 trailers were directly operated by the ICRC. It also entrusted some transport work to private firms using their own vehicles.

B. *Fuel.*

As we have just seen, the ICRC had considerable difficulty in obtaining trucks. It was equally difficult to obtain the fuel required for running them, as petrol was strictly rationed in Switzerland. The ICRC had to try to obtain it from abroad, and was successful only after protracted negotiation.

When the first contingent of trucks was landed at Barcelona, the delegation of the ICRC had at its disposal an initial reserve of 150,000 litres of fuel, and a weekly allocation of 50,000 litres. This fuel was advanced by Spain and charged to the American Red Cross.

The American Army supplied the petrol, particularly to the pipe-line at Lyons, for the shuttle service between Toulon and Geneva, in January 1945.

When preparing to use American and Canadian trucks in Germany, the ICRC had to ensure fuel supplies in advance. The Allied High Command in Paris, to which it applied, granted some petrol, which had to be sent from Marseilles and Lyons in tank-wagons. The French Government also promised to deliver 250 litres a day at the frontier close to Geneva. Finally, some of the fuel was sent from Switzerland, through the ICRC, to the supply-centres set up in Germany. Thus, two tank-wagons (i.e. about 36,000 litres of petrol) were sent to Moosburg in March; and tank-lorries also accompanied the convoys. For the Lübeck service the ICRC at the same time sent five lorries carrying petrol in containers. Later, the Lübeck delegation was supplied direct by the Allies.

At the end of April 1945, the Allied Fuel Office (Petroleum Section), which had supplied 85,000 gallons of petrol during the second half of March (i.e. 17 tank-wagons), informed the ICRC that it could thereafter count on 25,000 gallons weekly. This undertaking precluded any further risk of hold-up in the organization of road transport.

Between April and December, 1945, the American Army supplied nearly two million litres of petrol.

(3). *Use of the Committee's trucks.*

The trucks were reserved at first exclusively for carrying food supplies to Allied prisoners and internees, but it was not long before they were also used for the benefit of deportees, particularly in the case of the trucks assigned to the ICRC by the French Government; the latter hoped in this way to send relief to the civilian workers, whose position was causing it great anxiety. When the war came to an end, the ICRC was authorized to use American trucks for the relief of civilians. The ICRC's trucks were also used to transport people from one camp to another and to repatriate them, and to carry Red Cross mail and correspondence for PW.

The list given in the Annex to this Report contains detailed information on the use made of the trucks. Briefly stated, they made 3,140 journeys, travelled 2,831,840 kilometres, conveyed 8,602,580 kilograms of goods and repatriated 23,481 persons. In the present volume only a summary account can be given of the 366 missions carried out by the ICRC motor convoys during 1945.

Before they were sent to Germany, the trucks were used for conveying to Switzerland the goods unloaded at Barcelona, Toulon and Marseilles by the Committee's ships. During this period the ICRC was negotiating for permission to send its trucks into Germany, where the situation was growing more alarming every day. The foodstocks in the camps were inadequate; moreover, the camps in Eastern Germany had been evacuated and the prisoners were being moved westward; during these long marches the meagre provisions with which they set out were soon exhausted. The ICRC delegation in Berlin procured two trucks at the beginning of February, for the emergency relief of these PW columns. The supplies were loaded at the ICRC depots at Lübeck; the lorries thence made their way across Pomerania, leaving depots en route at Demmin, Altburgund (Oflag 63) and especially at Neubrandenburg, which became a distribution centre for the secondary depots (Parchim, Tatarow, etc.), situated along the route traversed by the evacuated prisoners. Any PW picked up on the roads were carried to the hospital at Neubrandenburg.

At the beginning of March the ICRC was at last authorized to send its own lorries into Germany. The first convoy crossed the frontier at Constance on March 7. The following is an account of this first mission.

First Mission. — The motor column consisted of 25 trucks, driven by Swiss drivers and escorted by a delegate of the ICRC and by 14 members of the German Army. Nineteen of these trucks, loaded with 120 tons of food, were to go to Bohemia, the other six to the North of Germany.

The fleet of trucks destined for Bohemia passed through Ulm, Ingolstadt, Bayreuth and Eger and reached Karlsbad in time to relieve two columns of prisoners. One of these columns,

5,000 strong, had come from the camp at Lamsdorf and was marching towards Bayreuth; the other, 6,000 strong, came from Teschen and was making for Auschwitz. The marching columns were spread over a distance of hundreds of kilometres, and their commanders were ignorant of the exact position of each group. The delegate's car and a motor-cycle were used for frequent reconnaissances. When the convoy located a company, on information from the commanders, the contents of one truck were handed over, against a receipt, to the camp leader and were distributed by him. The operations were carried out at night, when the men were halted. The supplies were distributed between March 9 and 11; each of the prisoners received about 5 kilos of food.

Empty trucks were used for the transport of the wounded and sick. Medicines were delivered to the relay hospital at Tchentschnitz, and the trucks then returned through Moosburg. One of them made a détour in order to take supplies of medicaments to the relay camp for prisoners (No. 4088) at Eger, and Stalag XIII B at Weiden. Eight trucks remained at Moosburg which had become a supply-centre; the others returned to Geneva on March 13.

Of the six trucks which went to Northern Germany, five carried 20,000 litres of petrol for the use of the delegation at Lübeck, and the sixth took medicaments to the camp at Luckenwalde, near Berlin. On their way through Berlin, they left part of the petrol there. Three of these trucks remained for ICRC activities in Prussia, and the three others returned to Switzerland after having supplied a camp near Berlin with foodstuffs brought from the dépôts at Lübeck.

Thereafter the missions continued, and the motor columns were despatched in all directions; those from Switzerland supplied Southern Germany, while others were organized by the delegation at Lübeck and did the same service in the North. There were also supply centres in Germany itself, under the direct control of a Red Cross representative, with their own lorry park. For instance, at the end of March a supply centre with 47 vehicles was set up at Moosburg, and transferred shortly afterwards to Ravensburg.

Deportees from the camps at Ravensbrück, Buchenwald and Mauthausen were also supplied ; on their way back, in April, the trucks transported certain categories of deportees, such as women, children, and aged or sick persons, whose evacuation was permitted by the German authorities.

In April several of the convoys were overtaken by the Allied advance. Some of the vehicles were requisitioned by the American troops, for the supply of liberated camps and the repatriation of prisoners and deportees. Others were diverted to Austria. A large number of prisoners had poured into the Tyrol, where a supply centre was quickly established by the despatch of two block-trains. During this time, most of the convoys were therefore obliged to change their destination whilst still *en route*.

At the end of April, the Allied High Command requested the ICRC to take relief to the PW who could not yet be repatriated, and to the civilians of various nationalities who were still in Germany, described as " Displaced Persons ". However, immediately after the capitulation on May 8, the Allied High Command decided to make its own arrangements for feeding nationals of Allied countries. Nevertheless, the ICRC had to carry on its activities until the end of the year, and it turned its attention more particularly to the former deportees.

After the surrender, the convoys remained in operation to the end of 1945, observing the same frequency and principles as before : relief on the journey out, repatriation on the journey back. Some of them deserve special mention.

At the end of May 1945, a convoy set out to cross the demarcation line between the American and Soviet armies, in order to take relief to the Jewish population at Terezin (Theresienstadt). It reached Prague without difficulty, thanks to the assistance of the Soviet military authorities.

In June, the trucks of the ICRC repatriated nearly 4,000 Italian prisoners of war from Bavaria, and 3,000 Swiss from Berlin, who were collected from an assembly point near Hanover (Fallersleben Camp).

The ICRC also organized the transport of relief supplies

to Austria, Hungary and Rumania, which were occupied by the Soviet armies. During the summer twenty-two trucks in three convoys travelled to Vienna, Budapest and Bucarest. They carried 180 tons of goods, part of which were supplied by the Joint Relief Commission. After accomplishing this task, they brought back repatriated persons to Switzerland.

Although no general agreement had been made concerning these missions, they were all successfully carried out, thanks to the tacit consent of the Russian military commanders, which was obtained along the route by the convoy-leaders.

As the first mission to Eastern Europe had proved successful the ICRC sent a convoy of fifteen trucks in September to Warsaw. In November, further convoys were sent to Vienna and Budapest.

* * *

As already mentioned, the ICRC trucks were also used to carry mail to and from PW and from the Central Prisoners of War Agency. When normal communications were interrupted in August 1944 by the Allied offensive, the ICRC took immediate steps to provide alternative arrangements, with the consent of the Allied authorities and the postal administrations of the countries affected. As it then had no vehicles for the transport of relief, the ICRC acquired a three-ton lorry and organized, at its own expense, a regular service between Geneva, Lyons and Marseilles, for the exclusive carriage of PW and Red Cross mail.

The following spring the Committee's trucks, originally destined for the transport of relief, were used for the carriage of mail-bags sent from and addressed to all the countries in the world, except Great Britain. The British Legation at Berne, in agreement with the ICRC and the Swiss postal administration, organized its own transport by truck between Geneva and an airport in France, whence the mail-bags were flown to England by British military planes.

After December 1944, an American plane also maintained a regular service between New York and Geneva, solely however

for the transport of PW mail between Germany and the United States. Civilian messages and PW mail of all other nationalities continued to travel, on the Committee's trucks, to Marseilles, where they were either handed over to the French postal authorities, or placed on the Committee's ships, or on American Army transport aeroplanes, and delivered to the ICRC delegations in the country of destination. Inward mail followed exactly the same route, and was delivered to the Swiss postal authorities on arrival in Geneva.

In the spring of 1945 the Swiss postal authorities were no longer able to forward the mail to Germany, and from then until April 1946 all correspondence with this country had to be carried by the ICRC trucks. These trucks maintained regular services between Switzerland and the different zones of occupation in Germany and Austria. They also transported the mailbags awaiting delivery to PW in Czechoslovakia and Poland which were held up in Switzerland.

(4) *Organization of Road Transport.*

Protection. — From the outset the ICRC was careful to ensure the security of its convoys. A request to the British Government to be put in touch with the French Forces of the Interior was refused. However, the French Committee of Liberation granted something in the nature of a safe-conduct : " The trucks for Switzerland should be marked in a special way, and instructions could be given to the combatants by wireless that these transports should not be attacked. "

A request for safe-conduct was also sent to the German Command on August 11, for the trucks which were on their way to Geneva from Barcelona, Marseilles and Lyons and which were to carry relief from the German Red Cross on their return journey. This sector, however, was liberated by the Allies before a reply reached the ICRC.

In order to protect its trucks as much as possible against air attacks, the Committee had them painted white and placed on them both the cross of the Swiss Confederation and the emblem of the Red Cross, with the initials of the ICRC between

the four arms. The belligerents concerned were informed to this effect and raised no objection to the use of these signs, but made it clear that they were nevertheless unable to guarantee the security of the convoys.

Despite these precautions, many of the convoys were attacked. Moreover, with the rapid advance of the Allies they came into the path of the fighting troops. Every convoy leader knew the procedure in such an event : the trucks were halted and the personnel took cover ; the leader carrying a white flag, advanced upon the nearest officer, presented his papers and his instructions for the convoy, and enquired how he might continue his journey. At night the flag was replaced by a white light.

As the vehicles were operating in dangerous conditions and on extremely poor roads, accidents were not unusual ¹. However, none were serious except one which occurred on the Pilsen road and was caused by the bad surface ; four refugee passengers were killed and eight seriously injured. The Czechoslovak Government assumed full responsibility.

However carefully planned, the itinerary laid down in the convoy-leader's instructions had frequently to be modified *en route*. The orders of the military authorities and the destruction of roads might at any moment require the trucks to make long détours.

To avoid delays through breakdowns, each convoy had its own mobile repair shop. A damaged vehicle that could not be repaired on the spot was taken in tow, and its load was divided between the other lorries. The convoy was thus not held up and was able to remain intact. On the return journey the drivers themselves serviced the trucks. Some twenty mechanics were employed by the ICRC for repair work.

Composition and equipment of the convoys. — A convoy of trucks usually consisted of about ten vehicles, in addition to

¹ Some lorries supplied by the French authorities had been sabotaged while under construction by workers belonging to the Resistance. An accident was caused by the steering post breaking on June 5, 1945, at Lodenice, in Czechoslovakia.

those carrying petrol and spare parts. PW were employed as drivers ; one instance of this was the employment of Canadian PW in the camp at Moosburg, who were released for this purpose by permission of the German Command. Five Swiss drivers thus sufficed for each convoy. But there was one drawback to this system : when their camp was liberated, the PW immediately left their work, and the convoy found itself in difficulties. After May, the Canadian drivers had all to be replaced by Swiss personnel.

Road transport activity, at its peak, required a staff of about 400, twenty-five of whom were convoy-leaders. The drivers were exempt from military service and were furnished with the necessary passports, permits, visas and safe-conducts, together with an armlet bearing the emblem of the ICRC. They carried everything they needed for their own use (sleeping-sacks, blankets, provisions and cooking utensils). Every convoy also had a receiving set, because no warnings were given of isolated air-attacks, which were announced only by wireless.

For help in the transport of the sick, the Swiss Red Cross supplied doctors and nurses to the ICRC, and equipment (blankets, mattresses, medicaments). Each convoy of about ten vehicles was accompanied by a doctor and four nurses, and the convoy-leader was provided with a medicine chest.

Truck pool. — In making over trucks to the ICRC the American Red Cross stipulated that preference was to be given to the transport of parcels for American and British PW. It was impossible, however, to fulfil this condition, because when on their journeys and in the camps the convoys encountered PW of all nationalities, besides deportees and civilian internees. As a result of hurried evacuation, these people were all herded together in the reception camps, and there would have been no justification in helping some, and not others.

In February 1945, the Committee placed the question before the British Government, which replied that the vehicles supplied by the Dominions were chiefly intended for the benefit of British and American PW, but that the ICRC,

in which the British Government had complete confidence, was free to decide what should be done in particular cases¹.

Internal organization. — For the organization of the motor convoys, the ICRC, in November 1944, created a separate section attached to the Division for Transport and Communications. During the first few months, motor convoys between the Mediterranean and Switzerland were managed by a private firm; their importance became so great, however, that the ICRC began to operate them directly.

The staff was recruited from the Swiss Army. Most of the convoy-leaders were officers from Army motorised units, and the convoys were under military command while on the road.

The central organization in Geneva comprised :

(1) a technical department which engaged staff, inspected and maintained the vehicles, obtained driving licences, number-plates, tryptiques for international travel, kept fuel accounts and prepared the convoys;

(2) an accounting and administrative department which dealt with salaries, insurance contracts, passport formalities, drew up instructions for each convoy and organized the work of the convoy-leaders.

The ICRC also established a number of depots and distribution centres near the German frontier, at Kreuzlingen and St. Margrethen in particular. These centres had repair shops and lorry parks. The work in Germany itself was divided into two zones by a line running from Berlin to Cassel. The depots in Switzerland, and that at Ravensburg, were the centres for the Southern Zone, while the delegation at Lübeck was responsible for the Northern Zone. Three fleets of trucks, 35 vehicles in all, were attached to the permanent depot at Ravensburg, about 20 kilometres from the Lake of Constance. The parcels were sent by rail from the Committee's warehouses at Geneva and Vallorbe to Ravensburg, and thence were

¹ See also p. 87.

distributed to the camps by truck every day. The isolated delegation at Lübeck, which had no contact with Switzerland, distributed relief supplies sent in the Committee's ships from America to Gothenburg. Most of the trucks at Lübeck had come direct from Sweden and America.

The four distribution centres at St. Margrethen, Kreuzlingen, Ravensburg and Lübeck were each in the charge of a leader responsible for their technical management. They were subordinate to the Committee's delegation in Germany, which alone was empowered to deal with the civilian and military authorities.

These depots on the Eastern frontier of Switzerland and in Germany made it possible to deliver supplies more quickly and to make the fullest use of the vehicles at the disposal of the ICRC.

After the end of September 1945, Basle became the starting point for all convoys, and relief supplies were stored after that date in the premises of the *Mustermesse* in Basle.

The road transport service was wound up at the end of 1945, and the 80 cars and 25 trucks remaining in the Committee's possession were then placed under the Administrative Service.

(5) *Return of Vehicles.*

The French trucks were returned to the French Red Cross in batches during June and July 1945; a few still remained for a time at the depots of St. Margrethen, Vernier and Lübeck.

As from the month of June, the American Red Cross announced its intention of offering to the American Army the vehicles it had lent to the ICRC. As a result, 164 trucks and 137 trailers were assembled at Geneva and made over on July 31, 1945, to the representative of the American Red Cross. The trucks were finally parked in Basle and the trailers in Geneva. In August, 75 trucks left Basle for Paris. Others were sent in different directions (Italy, Yugoslavia and Poland). Many of them were made over to the representatives of the American Red Cross in Europe: five in Denmark, four in Czechoslovakia and seven in Rumania.

On the other hand, the Canadian Red Cross declared itself ready to leave its 50 vehicles in the hands of the ICRC, as long

as they were needed. At the end of 1946 it handed them over to the Committee as a gift. The Committee then presented some to the National Red Cross Societies who had applied for them. Thus the Polish, Austrian, Hungarian, Rumanian and Yugoslav Red Cross each received four trucks. Fourteen vehicles were distributed among the delegations of the ICRC at Paris, Lyons, Berlin, Baden-Baden, Frankfurt, Vlotho, Prague, Vienna and Warsaw, and were still in use on June 30, 1947. The ICRC kept about ten for its own use in Geneva.

The closing of the Lübeck Centre, contemplated in July, was postponed until its stocks were exhausted. The Swedish lorries were sent to Norway, in accordance with the Allied authorities' desire to present them to the Norwegian Red Cross. The lorries which had been sent to the delegation in Lübeck by the ICRC were left there, so that its stocks might be cleared.

PART III

EXECUTION OF RELIEF SCHEMES

Chapter I

Collective Relief Supplies for Prisoners of War

§ 1. ADVANTAGES OF COLLECTIVE SUPPLIES

The immense scale of relief work for prisoners during the recent war is not easy to assess.

Individual parcels ¹ despatched by private persons, National Red Cross Societies or relief organizations took the form of postal packages, usually weighing five kilograms and addressed to prisoners by name. They were exempt from all postal charges ², and were despatched either direct or through the medium of the International Committee.

Parcels sent to the ports of Lisbon and Marseilles were checked by the delegates of the Committee and then sent on by post direct to the camps. Parcels arriving at Geneva in transit were immediately forwarded to their destination; their contents were not checked and the forwarding in no way involved the Committee's responsibility.

Other individual parcels were sent unaddressed to Geneva in cases or in bags, and a list of recipients drawn up by the donors came by separate mail. The Committee then attached

¹ See pp. 281 et seq.

² In conformity with Art. 38 of the 1929 PW Convention.

the list to the parcels, and forwarded these by rail to the camp leader, who distributed the parcels according to the instructions received.

The individual package system was adequate for a limited relief scheme, but was unfit to meet the needs of a host of PW and civilian internees of all nationalities.

From the autumn of 1940 onwards, the Committee, with the support of its delegates, the camp commandants, camp leaders and the PW themselves, recommended the donor organizations to send their relief supplies in the form of *collective consignments*.

These organizations complied with this advice and as a rule sent standard five-kilogram unaddressed parcels in cases — a new method which was evolved during the war.

They also sent bales of foodstuffs, clothing and underwear in bulk to the Committee. These goods were sent on from Geneva carriage-free by rail to a camp leader of specified nationality, who stocked and issued them according to need. These consignments could be sent only on behalf of a National Red Cross Society recognized by the other side.

Individual parcels were of course greatly appreciated by PW, to whom they brought most valuable encouragement. Through them contact was established with relatives or friends ; the receipt came back to the donor, bearing the signature and comment of the recipient. However, despite the psychological value of individual parcels, their distribution raised such practical difficulties that the ICRC preferred to handle collective consignments. Indeed, except for British or American addressees the German authorities allowed individual parcels to be handed over only when the identity of the men had been checked by the camp leader as well as by the camp commandant. A list showing the name, number and address of the recipients then had to be forwarded to the Committee, with the regulation labels. The lists and labels took some time to reach Geneva, and their transmission to the donor, sometimes in a distant country, involved a further delay. The postal itinerary and its hazards also had to be taken into account. Finally, all sorts of changes might take place during this process ; the consignees might have

moved to another camp, or have been sent to a labour detachment or to hospital,—not to speak of the men who might have died or been released, converted into civilian workers or repatriated.

Thus, in a great many cases, parcels did not reach their destinations. They were held in store for a few days and then distributed to PW of the same nationality who were sick or in need. They were only rarely reforwarded, for fear of loss. The receipt, when available, was sent back to the donor unsigned, or with one or more signatures of recipients other than the consignee. The donors, although glad to have helped one or more PW, were usually disappointed not to have assisted their own relative or friend.

The censorship of parcels in the camps was very thorough ; family parcels were often found to contain prohibited articles, or written and printed messages, which entailed total or partial confiscation. Not all consignments, indeed, were carefully checked on departure, as they were in Great Britain. Here the British Red Cross had organized two big packing centres for family parcels, the larger in London and the other in Glasgow. The Red Cross Societies of the Dominions, in particular those of South Africa and New Zealand, also had centres of this kind. Parcels made up by individuals were sent there and opened, their contents checked with the greatest care, then repacked according to a standard method, and put in sealed mail-bags.

Despatch through the post was both uncertain and difficult. The considerable increase in the number of PW in Germany brought about such an influx of letters, parcels, and receipts that the postal censors and distribution departments were often overwhelmed with work. Consignments were held up at some points in transit, and were liable to arrive at their destination several months later, or not at all. It transpired that from 60 to 70 per cent of personal parcels were lost in transit. The postal authorities declined all responsibility, since post-free carriage excluded parcels from registration. Searches by the Committee were therefore confined to enquiries in the camps. The temporary or final suspension of rail transport in different countries further complicated the situation.

Crated individual parcels accompanied by nominal lists and despatched by rail were more certain of arrival, but distribution difficulties such as deaths, transfers and releases remained.

Collective Relief Supplies therefore represented the most effective means of helping PW. Whilst avoiding the disadvantages of the individual relief system, these supplies provided the material additions necessary to the food and clothing allotted by the Detaining Authorities under Arts. 11 and 12 of the Convention. In all the occupied or belligerent countries of Europe, the food situation became worse from 1942 onwards, and this additional food was in many cases indispensable ; the needs of prisoners could indeed be met only by consignments of this type. The National Red Cross Societies sent the Committee collective gifts, usually from oversea sources, at regular intervals. The Committee allocated these gifts in accordance with the instructions received, on the basis of strengths supplied by the camps ; they were then equitably distributed within the camps to PW of the same nationality, according to the scale fixed by the donors. Strict supervision was exercised by camp leaders and camp authorities. The delegates of the ICRC, on their periodical visits, also confirmed the safe arrival of gifts.

This system of forwarding supplies also afforded a higher degree of safety, and the percentage of parcels found missing on unloading was usually very low. Camp leaders had stocks available to meet all contingencies, such as losses, thefts, or the unexpected arrival of new prisoners. In the last case the Committee adjusted its shipments to the new camp strength notified, and replaced the parcels drawn from the camp reserve stocks. The Committee could also send a consignment at short notice, from the stocks held in its warehouses in Switzerland. The undoubted advantages of collective consignments were emphasized by the Committee whenever a new relief scheme was being planned by a National Red Cross Society. When the problem arose of food supplies for Italian PW and military internees in Germany, the Committee again drew attention to the difficulties in the way of a distribution of individual

parcels : a real improvement for food and clothing of these internees could only derive from a fair allotment of collective parcels.

Most National Red Cross Societies adopted the collective relief system, and seemed convinced that standard parcels and bulk consignments were most suitable.

On November 7, 1940, in response to a request from the Committee, the British authorities gave their consent for the despatch of collective relief supplies from overseas. They hoped that this method would offer better safeguards and have better results in general than individual relief supplies. Six months later, they openly stated their preference for collective parcels. Personal parcels were, however, still only discouraged, rather than prohibited.

With regard to food supplies, the American Red Cross stated in July 1942 that all orders of standard parcels for individual PW would in future be refused. Private contributions were thenceforth accepted only for the purpose of distributing parcels to PW in general, or to those of a specified nationality. Relatives and friends wishing to send relief to PW were not prevented from doing so, but they had to make up the parcels themselves and hand them to the local post-office which then despatched them. The American Red Cross thus concentrated on collective aid to American or Allied PW and internees, sending the parcels in cases to the Committee, which forwarded them to the camps for distribution by camp leaders.

The British authorities decided about the same time that food parcels should be sent through the medium of the British Red Cross, without explicit addresses, for equal distribution among all British PW.

In taking these restrictive measures in respect of individual consignments and in thus promoting a rational and practical method of sending food supplies, the British and American Red Cross Societies acted in the interest of fairness and in the desire to simplify their own task and that of the Committee. To maintain the principle of equal treatment, they decided that PW still receiving food parcels from private sources should not, during the week in which such parcels arrived, share in the

general weekly issue of standard food parcels, or their equivalent in bulk consignments.

The German authorities on several occasions pointed out the difficulties of censorship and checking involved in the delivery of individual parcels to the camps. They decided to regulate these consignments by laying down that they must be packed in cases or mail-bags. Both cases and bags were addressed to the camp leader, who issued the parcels according to the nominal lists attached.

Some relief organizations, whilst recognizing the drawbacks of individual consignments, thought it their duty to conform to the wishes of a great many donors and continued to send supplies in this form until almost the end of the war. Large numbers of individual parcels therefore continued to arrive from the Belgian Congo, North Africa and French West Africa. They were intended for colonials, former colonials or other prisoners indicated by name. The French Government, the Brazilian and the Polish Red Cross Societies also sent this type of parcel. The Belgian Red Cross, in September 1944, adopted the advice of the Committee, as they considered that the system of individual parcels no longer conformed to the general conditions of the war. It scarcely seemed fair that a small number of PW should receive parcels individually, while so many others did not, and while the increasing transport difficulties prevented a normal collective supply.

The suspension of direct postal traffic with Germany in 1945 and the difficulties met with by the Swiss Postal Administration in finding rolling stock brought the despatch of individual parcels to an end.

The German and Italian Red Cross Societies sent both personal and standard parcels. Recognizing the force of the Committee's view, they agreed that perishable goods and articles without personal value for PW or civilian internees who had been repatriated or released, or who had died, should be handed over to camp leaders for distribution to sick or needy prisoners of the same nationality. An exception was made for strictly personal effects and for objects of value which had in all cases to be returned to the senders. The Committee gave

its formal approval to this rule, which was to be applied on a basis of reciprocity to parcels for prisoners and internees of all nationalities. The Committee's delegations in Canada, the Belgian Congo, Australia, British India and the United States were asked to take measures accordingly.

Although the collective parcel, a form of generalized relief which became part of the routine of the camps, never had the same personal value for the recipients as the individual parcel, it must be recognized that the standard five-kilogram collective parcel, the corner stone of relief work, played a vital part in the food supply of the PW and civilian internees. Collective relief was in fact one of the most important Red Cross achievements during the last war. The parcels, a gift from the community to the community, were distributed during the final phase of the war in the assembly centres and on the roads in Germany, and saved thousands of lives, without any distinction of nationality.

§ 2. DESPATCH AND RECEIPT OF GIFT RELIEF SUPPLIES

In 1940, relief schemes for PW and civilian internees took on regular proportions and entailed the movement of considerable amounts of foodstuffs, clothing, medical supplies and articles of all kinds. As the peacetime staff and resources of relief organizations were not equal to the extra work involved, the National Red Cross Societies were obliged to take on new personnel and to raise the funds required for war-time tasks. Some of them had the advice and aid of their Governments and received grants in cash and in kind from the Ministries responsible for food and supplies.

In some countries, the State, by its contribution to the work of the National Red Cross, was able to exercise a fairly considerable influence upon its activities. In others, the Societies had more independence, especially when they were able to collect large funds from the public and the prisoners' relatives.

In both instances, the work of the International Committee was usually the same, varying only in the way it was carried

out. When the Government was the principal source of relief, the Committee had to give an account of its use of funds both to the Government and to the National Red Cross.

The work of the Committee was easier when only one important donor was concerned, than when it had to negotiate with several and carry out differing instructions for the use and allocation of supplies. Nevertheless, the system of small contributions proved useful for filling in the gaps in standardized schemes which did not provide for war-victims who had no clearly defined status. The major donors, in fact, nearly always specified the recipients, both by their nationality and category ; on the other hand, private donors and small committees left the ICRC free to distribute the money or parcels as it thought proper. Standard consignments were, however, the most numerous and formed the greater part of contributions from overseas.

Packing and Marking

Relief supplies from overseas, which were sometimes six months on the way, required strong, compact and airtight packing. From the beginning, the ICRC, acting on information from the camp leaders, advised senders to make up parcels of uniform weight, size and packing, able to withstand handling in transit and in warehouses. The best packing was done by the Canadian Red Cross, whose parcels were sheathed in stout cardboard and packed in lots of 8 or 16 in plywood packing-cases. With the donors' consent, the Committee forwarded the cartons only to Germany and used the packing-cases to recondition other consignments arriving damaged in Switzerland. Some parcels sent from overseas, in particular from the Near East, were sewn up in stout canvas, which proved quite satisfactory. Light wooden boxes were not strong enough. The packing of parcels from the European countries and North Africa was handicapped by the shortage of the requisite material, and the percentage of losses was higher than for those from overseas, although not so high as for family parcels ; these were often badly packed, in spite of appeals made to the public by National Red Cross Societies at the Committee's request.

In 1942, it became urgently necessary to recover the packing material used in consignments to Germany. The Committee obtained the German authorities' undertaking to return packing material from the French Red Cross within France and from the Belgian Red Cross, to the country of origin, and to send material from overseas back to Geneva. Orders to this effect from the German military authorities to camp commandants were only partly carried out, especially when there was a shortage of rolling stock. A few wagon-loads of packing material were, however, sent back at regular intervals from Germany, from 1942 to 1944. Moreover, the German Red Cross was authorized to use Canadian Red Cross packing material for parcels sent to German prisoners in Canada for occasional consignments; these parcels arrived satisfactorily.

The question of marking parcels was an important one from the outset. The quantity and varied nature of relief supplies coming from all parts, the diversity of the donor organizations, and the vast numbers of PW and civilian internees of all nationalities held in many countries made it imperative to avoid all possible confusion in marking; in spite of this, there was much criticism.

The system of *colour markings* proved itself in practice. Some cases were painted all over, others only at the corners; some simply had bands or stripes of paint, in varying numbers and patterns. Sometimes only the labels on parcels and bales were of different colours. Inscriptions and special symbols for each nationality were also used.

Markings in fact had to be of all descriptions; besides varying with the country of origin, they differed sometimes according to the donor organizations of these countries, the contents of parcels, the nationality of the consignees and their status as PW or civilian internees.

After repeated efforts during the years 1941 to 1943, the Committee secured the senders' agreement to use a clearly defined and simple system. This was a code corresponding to that used for the Watson Business Machine statistics, by which donors were given monthly returns for the distribution made. Prisoners of each nationality were indicated by not more than

two letters,—for instance, AM (American), BE (Belgian), FR (French), G (Greek), followed by a reference number of one to three figures.

Reference to Donors

The donors wished their names to appear on parcels, labels and receipts, so that the recipients should be aware of their origin.

There were two types of sender whose names could at all times be shown : the private donor, and the National Red Cross Society established in its own country.

Organizations that were not recognized by one of the belligerent parties, such as Red Cross Societies in exile and relief organizations whose names showed their connection with a belligerent State, could not be mentioned. The German and Italian authorities, in particular, feared the propaganda effect of the influx of supplies from overseas. The German authorities invoked Art. 78 of the Convention in this respect, which lays down that prisoners may receive supplies from societies " regularly constituted under the laws of their country ". From this they argued that Red Cross Societies set up in exile abroad had no authority to appear as donors on the shipping documents. The Committee informed all Allied donors of these terms stipulated by the other side. There were three ways of overcoming the difficulty : (1) gifts of which the true origin could not be given were termed gifts of the Red Cross Society " of the donor's country of domicile " ; (2) gifts sent " through the medium " of that Society ; (3) gifts sent " through the medium of the ICRC ", if it was not expedient to mention any particular country.

The Committee was able to satisfy itself that these restrictive measures did not prevent the prisoners being informed, in one way or another, of the true origin of the gifts and the work in general of Governments and Red Cross Societies in exile.

Grading of supplies by Nationality

(a) American PW and Civilian Internees.

As early as November 1941, before the United States came into the war, the American Red Cross had shown considerable activity in behalf of Allied nationals. The Society sold several lots of standard parcels to the ICRC ; up to the United States' entry into the war, these parcels were re-sold to Swiss donors.

After the 1940 campaign, which led to the setting up of Allied Governments and Red Cross Societies in exile and the formation of Allied relief committees in the United States, the American Red Cross provided standard parcels for Belgian, Dutch, French, Greek, Polish and Yugoslav nationals, in conformity with financial agreements concluded by the Governments, the Red Cross Societies and other organizations of these countries with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Government. Thus the vast " Lease and Lend " scheme covered bulk deliveries of relief in foodstuffs, clothing, medicaments and other articles for Allied prisoners in Europe.

Guided by its own experience and that gained by the British Red Cross with its standard parcels, introduced in 1940, the American Red Cross went about its plans in a methodical way. Large quantities were despatched, indicated by number and subdivided into numbered sections. Distribution was made according to code letters and in conformity with the general ruling that PW and civilian internees of American nationality should have priority. Thus, assuming the ICRC had 300,000 standard food parcels available in Switzerland, then according to the general instructions, it issued, in the first place, one parcel a week to each American PW or civilian internee ; thereafter, it referred to the code letters for allocation to French, Dutch and other PW. Excellent results were obtained by this system, which enabled regular supplies to be made to Allied PW ; interruptions were only temporary, during the major transport crises or shipping hold-ups, or when vessels were lost.

Food parcels were of four principal types : (1) the standard parcel, (2) the invalid parcel, (3) the medical emergency kit, and (4) the capture parcel.

(1) The standard food parcel weighed 4.5 kilograms net and contained food in tins or preservative packing ; it had a maximum food-value estimated at 10,000 to 12,000 calories.

(2) In the invalid parcels, the less easily digestible items were replaced by food suitable for tuberculosis cases, or for stomach or liver patients ; these were in particular condensed milk, water-biscuits and rice. Whereas standard parcels were issued regularly, irrespective of the recipients' state of health, invalid parcels were limited to about 5 per cent of the total strength of the camp.

(3) The distribution of first-aid kits was better assured than that of food parcels, which, as far as the Allies were concerned, depended on purchases made by the donors. At the outbreak of war, the American Red Cross accepted the scale adopted for British prisoners, that is, one first-aid kit per 1000 PW in a camp, or two kits per 100 PW in a military hospital. This proportion was found inadequate, and after April 1944, five kits per 1000 men were issued to camps. The medical officers in charge who used the kits supplied the medicaments first to American PW, but also to large numbers of Allied PW under treatment in the same camp or hospital.

(4) The "capture parcel", instituted by the American Red Cross in 1943, owed its origin to the plight of aircraft crews captured after baling out, or when their planes had been shot down. These men had no kit and their equipment (heavy boots, electrically heated overalls and flying helmets) were of no use for life in camp. Emergency relief parcels for these men were therefore indispensable. From June 1943 onwards, the American Red Cross forwarded "capture parcels" to the Committee ; these were small fibre or plastic boxes, containing a set of underclothing and articles of personal use, especially toilet articles. One parcel was issued to each man belonging to the U.S. land, sea or air forces on his arrival at his first camp.

The distribution of "capture parcels" was made easier by the fact that Allied prisoners usually passed through a "Dulag" or transit camp before being sent to a permanent camp. The capture parcels were therefore handed over to the

camp leaders of the Dulag, who issued them to all new-comers. The parcel was accompanied by an Army toilet kit.

From the autumn of 1944, the American Red Cross, in order to give some variety to standard food parcels, introduced two new types of parcel. The contents of "A" were somewhat more digestible than those of the ordinary parcels. The parcels labelled "A" included commodities of slightly better quality and were allotted in the first place to American PW.

In addition to the standard parcels, tobacco, cigarettes soap, towels, blankets, footwear, clothing and underwear were sent to prisoners. These consignments, in the form of cases or bales, usually contained one type of article, and were useful for bulk distribution in the camps. For this reason, the American Red Cross introduced a further standard parcel intended for men who were isolated, which contained the following articles :

1 cap	1 greatcoat
2 pairs underpants	2 shirts
1 pair gloves	1 pair boots
2 handkerchiefs	6 pairs socks
1 battle blouse	2 pairs trousers
1 pair shoe laces	2 undervests

(b) *British Prisoners of War.*

The British Government and Red Cross Society had decided to send relief of identical weight and quality to the citizens of Great Britain and all countries of the Commonwealth. The contents of the parcels, however, varied slightly according to the origin, religion and habits of recipients. The Red Cross Societies of the Dominions and other parts of the Commonwealth arranged with the British Red Cross to supply standard parcels of the same description.

The Committee was instructed to issue one standard food parcel a week to every British prisoner, whatever his home country ; the men also received parcels direct from home.

The British standard food parcels weighed 11 lbs English ; various types, two of which were intended for Indian prisoners, were packed in Great Britain. The five in most common use contained products that would keep for some time ; their food value made them suitable for supplementing the daily rations of the Detaining Power. The composition of these parcels was excellent and served as a model for other Red Cross Societies.

Parcels of the ordinary kind contained the following products : biscuits, chocolate, condensed milk, jam (or syrup), fish, sugar, tea, meat roll (or sausage), soap, dried eggs, dried fruit (or puddings, or creamed rice), oatmeal (or rolled oats, or pancake batter), hot meat (or corned beef), cheese, margarine or butter. Vegetables, bacon, cocoa, sweets and seasoning were only included in a few types of parcels.

Products included in parcels for Indian prisoners were as follows : atta (flour), dahl (lentils), rice, salt, fish, curry powder, margarine, condensed milk, tea, dried or tinned fruit, biscuits, chocolate, sugar, vegetables, bacon, etc.

Parcels packed in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa were of identical weight and contents. Canada sent up to 70,000 parcels a week, whilst those from New Zealand reached the figure of 88,000.

In the interests of variety, standard parcels alternated with bulk supplies bought by the British community in the Argentine and forwarded through the Argentine Red Cross. At regular intervals, the British Red Cross, in agreement with the other Red Cross Societies of the Commonwealth, substituted one for the other. Four hundred tons of bulk supplies from the Argentine were equivalent to 20,000 standard food parcels. Supplies were likewise collected by the British Relief Committee in Brazil, and gifts or special parcels were sent by some Dominions. Thus amongst other products, the South African Red Cross sent the Committee 32 tons of sugar to the value of 1,500 South African pounds.

Unlike the American and French Red Cross, the British Red Cross did not add packets of cigarettes to the standard food parcels. Separate parcels containing a ration of 2 ounces

of tobacco and 50 cigarettes were sent each week to every British prisoner.

The British Red Cross despatched large quantities of uniforms, greatcoats, battle blouses, trousers and footwear, as well as shirts, pullovers, undervests, gloves, caps, linen, etc. The Australian Red Cross in Melbourne also supplied sheepskin coats, when the German High Command had given authority for these to be distributed in May 1944; each prisoner was to receive one. Clothing was sent at the request of camp leaders according to need. Whenever stocks of any particular article were exhausted, the Committee at once informed the British Red Cross. In addition, toilet articles and other articles in every day use were also provided.

From June 1943 onwards, the Canadian Red Cross made up capture parcels on the same model as those of the American Red Cross ¹.

When the war began, soap was included in food parcels, but camp leaders found that this spoilt the food and advised the Committee and the donors to pack the soap separately. From April 1, 1944 onwards, the British and Canadian Red Cross Societies made special consignments of soap, equivalent to three, and then two ounces a week for each man.

The Invalid Comforts Section of the British Red Cross reached a very high standard in preparing special parcels for the sick. There were two types of diet parcels and four kinds of medical parcels, which were sent to sick quarters attached to camp or to independent hospitals, on a scale of distribution based on camp strengths ².

The invalid parcel could replace or supplement the rations contained in the ordinary standard parcel, according to need. Some specially made-up diet parcels, as well as medical and surgical kits, were issued on the recommendation of camp and hospital medical officers.

Until September 1943, the majority of the parcels for senior medical officers were sent direct from London. They were

¹ The contents are given in the Annexes.

² See Annexes.

opened by the ICRC in Geneva, who made additions to the contents as requested, from reserve stocks in Switzerland. These reserve stocks were especially useful for supplying camps newly established and for meeting cases of extreme urgency. After September 1943, however, the growing variety and size of camp populations, together with transport difficulties, led the Invalid Comforts Section to replace direct consignments by supplies sent from Switzerland.

In July 1943, the Invalid Comforts Section sent a weekly total of 17,000 special parcels. This figure was even exceeded during 1944 and 1945.

(c) *French Prisoners.*

As early as 1940, relief to French PW was characterized by the large proportion of consignments in bulk. At that juncture, about a million men had been taken prisoner, and relief had to be organized with all speed. France was short of foodstuffs and packing material, so that a scheme such as that of the British and American Red Cross could not be introduced. Collective relief, in any case, did not play so important a role for prisoners from France itself as for British PW, since as soon as postal communications were resumed between Germany and France, these men received individual parcels from their relatives. This fact compensated, to some extent, for the absence of collective consignments. The ICRC therefore sent relief supplies primarily to camps with a strength of more than 20,000 French PW. These provisions were intended for the sick, for men who were undernourished or who had no relatives, and for labour detachments where conditions were bad, owing to local circumstances, the kind of work carried out, or the attitude of the camp commandant. These bulk supplies, which at first only provided 800 grams a month for each man, gradually increased, thanks to the efforts of the whole French Empire and French donors living abroad. The ICRC gave constant information to the donors, and assisted in the necessary negotiations.

The Directorate-General for Prisoners of War, at Lyons, —the executive body for relief work—was under the direct control of the Ministry of War ; in co-operation with the French Red Cross, it was able to plan the distribution in the camps before the relief supplies were despatched. From 1941 to 1944, supplies were sent in transit through Switzerland ; the wagons were examined by the Swiss customs on arrival from Lyons. The contents and packing of the parcels were verified by the Committee's experts, who reported losses and damage to Lyons ; the wagons were thereupon sealed and sent on their way with fresh waybills to Germany. The French Red Cross and Government had some difficulty in obtaining the necessary foodstuffs for these bulk consignments ¹.

The relief organizations and Red Cross Societies in North Africa took their share of this relief scheme. The Directorate for PW was anxious to receive its quota of foodstuffs at regular intervals, in order to supply the " Frontstalags " in France, in which the German authorities had assembled nearly all the African PW. These shipments were however held up by transport difficulties in the Mediterranean ². On the Allied landing in North Africa in 1942 and the total occupation of France, supplies were suspended until the autumn of 1944.

The French Red Cross at home and French donors overseas wished to establish a system of regular collective supplies by standard parcels, but the scheme could not be instituted in France itself until the liberation of the country. In 1942, the Free French organizations made financial arrangements with the American and British Red Cross, under which home supplies from France were supplemented by large consignments of parcels. In 1943, the rate of consignments was one parcel a month for each man ; a plan for distributing two parcels a month was only partially effective, as the first deliveries coincided with the breakdown of railway transport in Germany ³.

¹ See pp. 26 et seq..

² See p. 159.

³ See p. 172.

Bulk consignments, which included some dietetic foods, were supplemented by army type medical kits, adapted for use in the camps. These kits were sent to Lyons together with the food supplies. The Committee also bought various medicaments in Switzerland, on the charge of the French Government.

Besides standard food parcels, the United States, during the second half of the war, supplied parcels of medicaments and other special relief.

The great number of French prisoners made the problem of clothing a particularly difficult one. The uniforms of these men, captured after a brief campaign, were in most cases in good condition and lasted until the beginning of 1942. The position became more strained during the winter of 1942-43, and there was a great shortage of underclothing. The German authorities, who had seized a large quantity of French uniforms, distributed some of these to the prisoners. At the same time, the Directorate-General for PW was able to meet requirements in part from supplies drawn from reserve stocks, or from the manufacturers. These sources were exhausted in 1943 and deficiencies could only be made up from overseas. It was, however, difficult to clothe 750,000 men in this way, and deliveries in bulk did not begin until the end of 1944. Conditions in Germany no longer allowed of normal distribution, so that uniforms could only be supplied to camps easily accessible from Switzerland, or via Lübeck.

(d) *Belgian, Dutch, Greek and other Allied Prisoners.*

Supplies to Belgian prisoners differed from those for the French in only two respects: (1) relief consignments from the Belgian Congo, which corresponded to those from North Africa for the French, only began towards the middle of the war and were entirely for European Belgians, there being no native prisoners from the Congo; (2) the limited number of prisoners permitted the speedier provision of parcels by the Belgian Red Cross.

The other Allied prisoners, such as the Dutch, Greeks, Norwegians, Poles and Jugoslavs, only received a steadily diminishing supply of family parcels from their own countries.

After the events of 1941-42, the flow of parcels to Greek, Norwegian, Polish and Yugoslav prisoners ceased altogether and the supply then depended chiefly on the relief organisations set up abroad to assist these men, in co-operation with the Governments in exile established in London. The organizations in the Argentine, Brazil, the British Commonwealth or the United States sent their supplies through the Red Cross Societies of those countries, or through the Egyptian Red Crescent in the case of those in Cairo. These Allied organizations and Red Cross Societies in exile negotiated agreements for the supply of foodstuffs, and later of clothing.

All these PW received British or American standard parcels at the following rates: Dutch, two a month; Greeks, three; Norwegians, four. The Belgians, Poles and Yugoslavs received, like the French, one parcel a month until 1944, and thereafter two, as far as transport allowed.

The following is a brief summary of the relief supplies distributed by the ICRC to Dutch prisoners:

(a) *Regular consignments*: two standard parcels a month to each man, from the American or British Red Cross (gifts of the Dutch Red Cross in London, or the Dutch Embassy in Washington), and about 230 British or American cigarettes monthly for each man.

(b) *Periodical consignments*: in place of regular supplies:

(1) Foodstuffs in bulk sent by the Argentine Red Cross;

(2) Equipment sent by the British Red Cross;

(3) Clothing given and forwarded by the ICRC on behalf of the Dutch Legation in Berne, at the request of camp leaders and with the consent of the Detaining Power.

This method of supply was, with some variations, adopted for all Allied prisoners other than American or British.

(e) *Italian Prisoners.*

In Italy, where a marked preference was shown for individual family parcels, the Italian Red Cross promoted a system

of despatch which, although not very systematic, was appreciated by the recipients. The number and value of parcels sent direct by post cannot be determined.

However, at the request of many prisoners, the Italian Red Cross introduced a system of standard parcels in the winter of 1942-43. The first 5,000 parcels were sent in March 1943 to prisoners in various parts of the British Commonwealth, who were sick or who had no relatives. After the events of September 1943, this scheme came to an end.

The Italian Red Cross, whose means were limited, concentrated on sending medical supplies to Italian senior medical officers, since a large proportion of the men were detained in tropical areas; here the illnesses they had contracted during the campaigns in Africa were aggravated by the climate. The treatment prescribed by the Italian medical officers often differed from that proposed by their Allied counterparts, so that urgent requests for large consignments of Italian pharmaceutical specialities had to be met.

In view of the climate, the clothing question hardly arose; moreover, the Detaining Powers provided what was required.

At the end of the war, the Italian Red Cross was reorganized and assisted the Italian prisoners in North Africa.

(f) *German Prisoners.*

There were but few German prisoners until the North African campaign. Up to that time, they were supplied by the Detaining Powers with all their prime necessities. After 1940, the German Red Cross arranged the despatch of family parcels and, in the early years of the war, of Christmas parcels.

From 1943 onwards, the German Red Cross called upon the Army authorities to aid in the bulk shipment of uniforms. In accordance with Army regulations, the German Government only supplied equipment to NCOs and men. Officers were given special grants (*Selbststeinkleiderzuschüsse*) to procure their own clothing; the allowance was paid to their next of kin, who had to make up the clothing parcels themselves, either from personal stocks or by private purchase. These

individual parcels were made over to the German Red Cross, which verified and despatched them.

Family parcels containing foodstuffs sent in the same way, after checking by the German Red Cross, were of two kinds :
(a) letter parcels weighing from 250 gr. to 2 kilograms and
(b) postal parcels of 2 to 5 kilograms.

When increasingly severe food restrictions prevented most families from making up these parcels, the German Red Cross offered standard parcels of a specified weight, each containing two kinds of food (*Typenpakete*). Those most usually sent contained cigarettes, tobacco, biscuits and toilet articles.

In the spring of 1944, the German Red Cross planned to make monthly consignments of 200 tons of collective food parcels for the 40,000 prisoners in North Africa, so that each man might receive one standard parcel a month. This scheme was especially handicapped by the lack of transport.

Christmas Parcels to German and Italian Prisoners

The Italian Red Cross sent books on art in the place of food parcels at Christmas.

In 1941, the German Red Cross, in agreement with the German Government, deposited large sums in Swiss francs with the Committee, so that the latter's delegates might buy Christmas gifts for prisoners in various parts of the British Commonwealth. The British, Australian and Canadian Governments consented to these purchases. The Committee's delegate was thus able to give each of the 2,942 officers and men held in Canada a parcel containing 100 cigarettes, chocolate, toilet articles and linen. He also handed over collective gifts to camp leaders, such as musical instruments, table mats for dining halls, razors, sports gear and so on, and a sum of money for a Christmas dinner.

In 1942, the German Red Cross and Government made similar arrangements, but on a large scale, owing to the increase in the number of prisoners.

In 1943, the German donors wished to continue the practice, but had some difficulty in obtaining, through the ICRC, the

permission to purchase goods in Allied countries. Great Britain limited the purchases and asked that they should be replaced, at least in part, by consignments in kind from Germany.

In the same year, the Australian Government found a way out of the dilemma, by consenting to the German scheme on condition that a similar plan should be carried out by the Committee's delegation in Berlin in behalf of Australian prisoners in Germany.

Christmas Parcels for Allied Prisoners

All the Red Cross Societies of the Allied countries were careful to replace the standard parcels at Christmastime by parcels containing a few delicacies. Extra issues of 50 or 100 cigarettes were given to each man.

In 1942, for instance, Belgian PW received supplementary parcels from New York containing one pound of gingerbread, half a pound of fig biscuits and half a pound of raisin biscuits. Norwegian PW, in 1942 and 1943, received parcels packed by the ICRC in Switzerland, which contained 125 gr. chocolate, 250 gr. biscuits, cigarettes and, some of them, a bottle of red wine. In 1941, the ICRC obtained the belligerents' authority for the inclusion of greeting cards in Christmas parcels.

Prohibited articles

The following could not be sent to PW of any nationality :
Alcoholic beverages.

Medical personnel armlets (except for those entitled to wear them).

Certain toilet articles (toothpaste in tubes, nail-files) ¹.

Arms, tools and objects liable to be used for escape or sabotage (metal saws, files, screw-drivers, drawing pens, scissors, compasses, identity cards, maps, cameras, field-glasses, pocket knives, scout knives, tin openers) ².

¹ Nail-files were not confiscated in Italy.

² Germany and Italy allowed small penknives and Italy scissors.

Money, correspondence, printed matter (in parcels).

Certain forms of office equipment (multigraph apparatus, carbon paper, duplicating paper, marking ink, stencils, note books, calendars, etc.).

Certain games and sports gear: skis, metal golf clubs, referee whistles (allowed in Germany during games and taken away after use), tennis nets¹, ping-pong nets, tennis balls, gymnastic rings, ropes, Indian clubs, cricket bats, boxing-gloves, football boots, dumb-bells.

Cigarette papers, cigarette holders, packets of cigarette papers².

Negotiations concerning prohibited articles

Although the ICRC had agreed with the belligerents on rules for the authorization of articles intended for PW, some articles remained in dispute throughout the war³. The ICRC had to begin negotiations anew with the Detaining Powers whenever a new type of parcel contained articles that were liable to confiscation.

In Australia, for instance, quarantine regulations proscribed the import of meat that had not been completely sterilised; some tinned meat sent by the German Red Cross was impounded in consequence. After having informed the donors of this particular regulation, the ICRC negotiated with the Australian authorities for the replacement of these goods.

Consignments of coffee from the Allied Red Cross Societies to PW in Germany and Italy also caused difficulties. Since PW in labour detachments were in contact with the population, there was a danger of illicit trading in coffee (sale or barter, and black-market dealings in preparation for escape). The Germans prohibited the despatch of coffee, but the ICRC

¹ These and the following articles were only prohibited by Italy.

² On October 27, 1944, the German authorities granted permission to distribute these articles to PW in Germany, on condition that the other side took similar steps. The authorities kept the prohibition in force until March 1945, from which time they agreed to these articles being distributed, if contained in German Red Cross parcels.

³ See pp. 12-13.

interceded in favour of the hospitals, pointing out that coffee was issued under medical supervision and that the patients had no contact with the civil population. The German authorities then granted this request.

In 1942, the Italian authorities prohibited the issue of coffee in the camps. The ICRC, which had received large gifts of raw coffee from Brazil and Venezuela, made arrangements with the donors for the coffee to be roasted and ground in Switzerland and then sent in small quantities to all the hospitals and to the sick, on the basis of 2% of the total strength in each camp.

The same difficulties occurred with regard to chocolate, but the ICRC obtained the belligerents' approval for small quantities.

As the Convention provides for the use of tobacco in the camps, the Detaining Powers placed tobacco and cigarettes on sale in the canteens at the beginning of the war; but as early as 1941, the Germans stated their inability to do this, in view of the great influx of Allied PW. The Allied donors had therefore to supply tobacco themselves; this led to some difficulty, since certain types of packing had printed inscriptions which the German authorities regarded as propaganda. Some confiscations occurred, and the ICRC had provisionally to remove the original packing of some brands warehoused in Switzerland and to send the contents in plain bulk. In course of time the donors overseas were able to make fresh consignments in packings acceptable to the adverse party.

All large consignments of clothing required strenuous negotiations¹; three instances of this may be quoted.

Whilst the Italian authorities would only allow khaki pullovers, the German authorities refused them to begin with and even placed conditions on the admission of grey pullovers; at first they also objected to brown shirts.

The Italian authorities refused to allow shoes and insisted upon Army boots. In 1942, the Germans introduced the *Bekleidungs-Soll* regulation, by which prisoners were allowed

¹ See p. 36.

to possess only two articles of clothing of the same kind ; they confiscated nearly all the footwear which the men could not prove to be their own property, stored it under their own supervision and gave out wooden clogs in exchange.

The British authorities prohibited the distribution in Egypt of *Afrika-Korps* uniforms, owing to their similarity with those of the British Forces in Africa (khaki shirt and shorts).

§ 3. PURCHASE OF RELIEF SUPPLIES BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

In 1942 and 1943, the ICRC made purchases for PW and civilian internees amounting approximately to fourteen million Swiss francs.

These purchases mainly comprised foodstuffs such as vegetables, flour, tinned meat and fish, from countries other than Switzerland, especially from Hungary, Rumania, Tunisia and Portugal. Condensed milk, toilet articles and everyday articles were bought in Switzerland.

During and after 1944, general trading conditions compelled the ICRC to purchase mainly in Switzerland. The most varied commodities were bought during that particular year, including Communion wine, Passover bread, jams, soup thickening, green coffee, white flour, apples, soup cubes, Ovaltine, tunny fish, condensed milk, cheese, cigarettes, shaving tackle, tooth-brushes, tooth-paste, barber's clippers and scissors, combs, tin openers, padlocks, pens, paper bags, typewriters, sewing machines, bicycles, children's cots, feeding bottles, etc.

Two members of the Relief Division were in charge of the Purchasing Section. Purchases were, as a rule, carried out as follows :

(1) Reports from delegates on the lack of certain articles in several camps.

(2) Requests by the PW or internees, communicated to the Geneva representatives of the Red Cross Societies concerned.

(3) If these representatives agreed, instructions were given to the Purchasing Section to draft a provisional buying scheme.

(4) Call for tenders and rendering of an estimate by the Section.

(5) Submission of the estimate to the donors' representatives.

(6) If the estimate was accepted, allocation to the Section of funds not exceeding the estimate.

(7) Request to the suppliers for details on conditions of purchase, customs classification, gross and net weights, and packing methods.

(8) Application for export permits to the Import and Export Section of the Federal Department for Commerce in Berne, with a statement of the method of financing the purchases (origin of gifts, etc.).

(9) In the case of rationed goods, simultaneous application to the Commodity Section and the Rationing Section of the Federal Wartime Office.

(10) On receipt of the export permits, placing of the order with the suppliers.

(11) On delivery of the goods, verification of quality and quantity.

These eleven points merely outline the procedure. The operation was, in point of fact, subject to many difficulties, the greatest of which was the increasing scarcity of goods. Few firms were in a position to deliver goods in the large quantities required.

In most cases, offers were not firm and contained reserve clauses on price increases. A great many suppliers, apprehensive of exhausting their stocks and of being unable to satisfy their usual customers, preferred not to quote for orders from the Committee. At the same time, the shortage of packing material grew; the strict rationing of paper and cardboard delayed, and sometimes even prevented, the delivery of articles already ordered, or available. Assembling and packing in the Committee's warehouses would have been both complicated and costly; firms able to carry out this work under expert supervision, according to instructions from Geneva, had therefore to be found.

Export regulations in Switzerland were another source of difficulty. Blank export permits, which did not state the quantity or quality of the goods for export, could only rarely be obtained, so that the ICRC usually had to await a special permit before placing an order, or to make purchases conditional on the permit being granted. As a rule, suppliers refused to accept conditional orders, for fear of loss should the permit be refused. Nevertheless, despite the awkward supply position for certain goods and raw materials in Switzerland, the ICRC always met with understanding and support from the authorities, who in difficult cases made allowance for the fact that the operation served a humanitarian purpose.

For technical reasons, no export quota could be allocated to the Relief Division for certain rationed goods. However, the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, which had quotas for these goods, shared these with the Committee in urgent cases.

In 1946 and 1947, the commodity shortage in Switzerland became more severe, and prices rose sharply. The ICRC was obliged to make purchases outside Switzerland.

The attached Annexes include a general summary of the purchases made by the Committee from January 1, 1944, to June 30, 1947.

§ 4. THE WAREHOUSES OF THE ICRC

(a) *Stocks in European transshipment ports.*

*Southern Route*¹.

Relief supplies from Great Britain, the United States, South America and Africa, intended for Allied PW, had to be unloaded at Lisbon or, with the consent of the British authorities, in another neutral European port; navicerts were only granted on this condition.

¹ See p. 158.

Since rail traffic from Lisbon to Geneva was very congested, slow and costly, and road transport could not be considered, the ICRC obtained authority to forward the goods by sea from Lisbon to Marseilles on neutral vessels; the supplies were then sent on to Switzerland by rail, to be stored in ICRC warehouses and then forwarded to camps.

During the whole of the war, Lisbon was the great central transshipment port. From 1940 onwards, a delegate was stationed here and for five years worked in close contact with the representatives of the National Red Cross Societies. The work of the Red Cross in Lisbon during these five years was extensive. The handling of Red Cross supplies, the negotiations both with the Portuguese authorities and the Blockade Control, made Lisbon a very animated centre of relief activities.

The following account outlines the principal duties of the delegation in Lisbon.

(1) — On receipt of the consignment advice the head delegate recorded this in the register and gave each bill of lading a number.

(2) — Before fixing the date of despatch, he applied to the Portuguese customs authorities for exemption of dues and other privileges. About ten days elapsed before the reply reached the Committee's customs agent. For consignments in transit, the delegate applied for free re-export facilities, and for exemption from export tax on purchases made in Portugal.

(3) — All consignments from overseas were covered by a British navicert, for which application had to be made to the British Consul General in Lisbon. The document was available within twenty-four hours.

(4) — The delegate forwarded the navicert, together with the application for export or re-export permit (whichever was required), made out on official stamped paper, to the Portuguese Ministry of Economic Services.

(5) — From 1941 until the end of the war, the Lisbon port authorities allowed a 90% rebate on all port dues; application had however to be made in each case for this rebate.

(6) — Application to the dock labour agencies for the unloading, warehousing and loading of goods at cost price ; this was also granted for the duration of the war.

(7) — The application to the Portuguese Ministry of Economic Services, the navicert, the original bill of lading and the cargo list were handed to the Committee's transit agent. A further time lapse of ten days was necessary before the goods could be loaded on the vessels.

(8) — On completion of loading, the accompanying documents were submitted to the delegation office for stamping and signature before being handed to the British Consul General a few hours prior to departure. The navicerts attached to the manifest were handed over at Gibraltar during inspection. All other formalities were effected by the Committee's transit agent.

To avoid loading entire cargoes for consignees of the same nationality (British mail-bags, for instance), the Lisbon delegation tried to arrange combined cargoes on the basis of the arrival dates of supplies. Cargoes were not transhipped direct from incoming to outgoing vessels ; too many cargoes arrived simultaneously and some had suffered damage owing to insufficient packing. The parcels were stored in the port warehouses ; however, these were sometimes so full that consignments had to be stacked on the quays under tarpaulins. In view of the port area and its congestion, it will readily be understood that unloading was a matter of great difficulty, and that reloading for Marseilles, which had to be effected fairly soon, was also far from easy.

Until May 1942, there was hardly ever an examination on arrival except by the customs, and goods were inspected only by the Lloyds' agent in Lisbon. The vessels sometimes reached port before the delegation had received the relevant documents ; accordingly, the delegation itself organized a checking system ; it engaged a tallyman who was present on arrival of the goods, which he then checked, sorted and warehoused. Shortages and damage were recorded and the damaged parcels repacked. Usable goods which were too damaged to undergo further

transportation were sold or distributed locally ; goods unfit for use were made over to the public refuse service. After having passed through several hands in the countries of origin, parcels were subject to two, three or sometimes four further handlings when loading and reloading were effected by barges. The same occurred at Marseilles, Toulon and Genoa, in Switzerland and finally at the camps.

The delegation sent regular fortnightly lists to the ICRC of all relief supplies arriving at Lisbon for prisoners of war ; they also sent extracts from these lists to the donor organizations.

Goods traffic in Lisbon, already considerable, greatly augmented in 1943 after the decision of the American, British, French, Belgian and Yugoslav Red Cross Societies to increase their reserve stocks of food, clothing and other articles ; the American Red Cross, in particular, set up large stocks in Switzerland.

After the opening of the port of Lisbon to Red Cross traffic (at the end of 1940), mail-bags from Great Britain were also sent there ; these were deemed not to leave the postal circuit in passing via Portugal, whether by rail or sea. The Portuguese and British postal authorities (a representative of the General Post Office was permanently stationed at Lisbon) attended to the unloading, warehousing and reloading of the bags, without calling upon the services of the ICRC delegate. On a claim being lodged by the Committee with regard to contents missing from bags, at Marseilles or Genoa, the Portuguese postal authorities gave the following account of their security measures :

(a) — From discharge at Lisbon and until reloading, British mail-bags were in the care of the Portuguese postal staff.

(b) — On delivery to the shipping companies whose vessels had been chartered by the ICRC, the mail-bags were checked singly by the representatives (1) of the postal authorities, (2) of the shipping company, (3) of the stevedores ; in case of discrepancies, the bags were recounted.

(c) — The same checkers examined the bags singly ; sacks which were torn, opened or unsealed, were removed and replaced by bags in good condition. Those which had been too badly damaged were sent to the Post Office depot for repair.

In October 1942, the first consignment of mail-bags from the Dominions and other countries reached Lisbon. The first category arrived from Great Britain on British vessels, the second from the United States by neutral ships. The cargoes were placed in the same warehouses, and checked and reconditioned in the same manner as mail from England.

The mail-bags from other countries (Belgian Congo, etc.) were the sole concern of the Portuguese postal authorities, who warehoused them on their own premises ; this was only for a very brief period, as they were given priority for re-despatch through the ICRC.

On their return to Lisbon, the vessels brought goods (mail bags, cases or bales) from the German and Italian Red Cross Societies for PW in Great Britain, India, South Africa and Uruguay. The East-West traffic could not compare with the West-East, as the number of Axis PW and civilian internees was much smaller than those of the Allies.

Consignments for the East-West route were also subject to the following formalities during transit through Portugal :

(1) — *Permission of Blockade authorities.*

No consignments could be reforwarded overseas without authority from the local blockade authorities ; application was in each case made in writing to the British Consulate-General by the delegate in Lisbon (with the exception of consignments for North Africa, for which a landcert or navicert was required). The letter of application was returned, marked " Approved ". Applications were never refused, but on some occasions the British authorities asked to be shown the arrival documents.

(2) — *Portuguese re-export permits.*

For each consignment, a separate application had to be made to the Ministry of Economic Services, stating the names

of senders, addressees and beneficiaries, the number, weight, description, contents and value of the parcels, and the form of transport contemplated (rail, ship or aeroplane). On occasion, the navicert had to be attached. Although this information was only required for statistical purposes, the authorities insisted on their punctual submission in full.

(3) — *Exemption from import and other duties.*

Although exemption of this nature was required under the 1929 Convention, to which Portugal was a signatory, the Ministry of Finance demanded an application in each particular case. In February 1944, exemption of duties was only allowed in respect of prisoners of war, and was refused outright for civilian internees. Equal treatment for these two categories of war victims, though accepted by the belligerents, was not then admitted by Portugal.

Warehousing at Barcelona. — With the increasing danger to maritime traffic in the Mediterranean, shipments for Marseilles had to be interrupted in the middle of May, 1944. Shortly afterwards, all sailings for the Mediterranean were stopped and goods accumulated in the Lisbon warehouses to such an extent that the delegation was compelled to hire warehouses outside the port, at great expense.

Owing to the inconvenience of warehousing goods which were mainly perishable, the ICRC advised Red Cross Societies to curtail or suspend their consignments to Lisbon, until normal dispatch to Geneva could be resumed.

At the same time, the ICRC also studied the possibility of setting up other depots in Spain and Portugal, so as to prevent, if possible, a complete stoppage of relief traffic, and to permit forwarding to Switzerland overland. These depots would have had the advantage of being easily accessible to American, British and Allied vessels. A scheme for setting up a depot at Leixoes, near Oporto, had already been drafted in 1942; it was again considered, but was not given effect.

In Spain, the Committee chose the port of Barcelona and the British authorities gave their approval in principle to the

despatch of goods to this port. Barcelona could be entered in all weathers by vessels of large tonnage and had the necessary equipment for loading cargoes direct into railway wagons and motor vehicles. It was less convenient for warehousing, since its limited sheds were designed to accommodate Spanish imports only, rather than goods in international traffic ; storage charges were also very high. Other warehouses could be found at cheaper rates outside the dock precincts, but their use entailed heavy carriage costs. Unloading at Barcelona started in June 1944, and the ICRC then estimated it sufficient to warehouse 20,000 tons, requiring a floor space of 60,000 sq. metres.

The Committee then apprised the Spanish Legation in Berne of their scheme for rail transport from Barcelona to Port-Bou, a small port on the Franco-Spanish frontier, and thence by motor vehicles to Geneva. The authorities gave their consent for the transport of all goods across Spain in transit, and free rail carriage from Barcelona to Port-Bou.

These warehouses remained in use until June, 1946.

Marseilles. — Under an agreement between the belligerent Powers, supplies for PW unloaded at Marseilles were to be immediately reloaded on railway trucks and despatched to Switzerland ; no stocking in the port was allowed, and transit could only be effected through France. This clause, to which the ICRC adhered in general, laid a great burden on the local delegation and on the dock-workers. Cargoes were mixed *en route*, parcels were found broken into or emptied during loading at Lisbon. Some packings had not withstood the journey and the contents were heaped at the bottom of the holds. Reconditioning had to be done at first in awkward circumstances, as the ICRC premises were cramped and badly equipped. On application to the port authorities, the ICRC obtained better conditions which enabled cargoes to be discharged more rapidly.

After inspection, counting, sorting and division by lots, goods were loaded in wagons. During the early months of 1942, rolling stock became scarce in Marseilles ; to meet this

difficulty, the ICRC secured fifty Swiss wagons for use as a reserve at the port. In spite of the risk of theft, it was decided to warehouse goods temporarily in the town, where adequate premises were available. The Committee even recommended that goods should be sent there, as far as storage capacity allowed, in anticipation of sea transport difficulties.

After June 1943, the use of ICRC vessels was considered for the transport between Lisbon and Marseilles of consignments from North Africa intended for PW from those areas. Some of these men were interned in occupied France, and the French Red Cross wished to send them parcels direct from Marseilles. In view of steadily increasing transport and storage difficulties in Switzerland, the ICRC decided that the goods should be sent not direct to camps, but to the warehouse it then possessed in Paris. This met with the Blockade authorities' proviso that the distribution of supplies should be supervised by the Committee's delegates. Senders were requested to mark the cases "Frontstalag", in order to distinguish them from supplies intended for prisoners in Germany.

Marseilles received relief supplies from Syria, Martinique and Guadeloupe, carried by French vessels from Casablanca. Relief supplies for North Africa or destined for Lisbon were also sent from this port.

Toulon. — After a few months interval, the Lisbon traffic was resumed in the autumn of 1944, but the vessels, with the exception of the *Caritas II*, could not be unloaded at Marseilles, where the docks had greatly suffered through bombardment. Vessels were sent to the harbour of Toulon, which the Allied Supreme Command had assigned for the use of the ICRC for its Mediterranean traffic. Goods arriving in this port were to be despatched only in conformity with storage space in Switzerland. Since at that time such space hardly existed, these re-shipments came to a temporary standstill. Within a short time, the only goods sent on were the relief stores urgently asked for by the camps and which the warehouses in Switzerland could no longer supply. Warehouses therefore had to be established in France. At Toulon itself, the ICRC

set up an important centre in the *Arsenal de Mer*. Goods sheds and warehouses which had been seriously damaged in air raids were allocated to it on condition that they were repaired. Whilst the repairs were being done, the Committee was allowed to use a very large warehouse in the *Arsenal de Terre*, four kilometres from Toulon. Goods were carried from the harbour to the warehouse by road.

Thanks to the help of the naval, military and civil authorities, the ICRC base at Toulon became a model establishment for the docking of the ships, and the warehousing and onward despatch of the cargoes. It included an unloading jetty 180 metres long and 18 metres wide, with a railway track, which allowed goods to be unloaded direct on to railway wagons. The warehouses, now repaired, and the new building could accommodate 9,300 tons of relief stores.

The supervision of the storehouses was maintained in the day time by the ICRC staff and the harbour personnel. During the night, a guard was kept by a patrol of harbour police consisting of 12 to 15 Senegalese riflemen.

In March 1945, the Allied authorities permitted the rail transport from Geneva to Toulon of goods from the German Red Cross, provided the total despatches did not exceed 1,000 tons a month, that storage, handling, and loading on ships at Toulon was done at the Committee's responsibility, and that the shipping space was supplied by the ICRC.

Genoa. — Cargoes of varying types of parcels (bulk food, clothing, footwear, blankets, etc.) and British postal parcels were unloaded at Genoa after May, 1942. These parcels from various sources and addressed to Allied PW, only passed through in transit. The permit for free transit through Italian territory had to be renewed for each shipment.

Northern Route (Gothenburg-Lübeck ¹).

In view of the hold-up of relief parcels in Atlantic and Mediterranean ports, due to the breakdown of traffic caused

¹ See p. 163.

in its turn by the events in France in 1944, measures were taken, at the end of the summer of that year, to send to Sweden ships carrying relief supplies destined for Germany. The Swedish ships *Mangalore* and *Travancore* arrived at Gothenburg on September 6, 1944, after having called, without unloading, at Barcelona. Two days later the *Gripsholm* arrived direct from Philadelphia with a cargo of Christmas parcels for American PW, medical stores, and standard food parcels. It was difficult to accommodate the cargoes in the free port, already overflowing with goods owing to the restrictions imposed shortly before between Germany and Sweden. The supplies remained there for nearly two months, stacked in wooden sheds. The harbour administration promised the ICRC permanent storage for 12,000 tons¹.

In January 1945, 30,261,000 kilograms of various goods had been received at Gothenburg; a little more than half had reached their final destination. The American PW had, for the most part, received their Christmas parcels on Christmas Eve.

At this point the shuttle service had, in its turn, to be suspended, for supplies of coal, until then obtained only with difficulty, were completely stopped. For the same reason, and also because of the scarcity of wagons, another cessation of rail transport was to be expected. This was a disquieting situation for the ICRC delegate, whose warehouses were then full². It was possible, as an extreme measure, to build temporary wooden huts, since there was no lack of that material in Sweden, or to use as floating warehouses the numerous vessels lying idle in the harbour.

Countless improvisations resorted to during the last weeks of the war ensured the safe transport of relief to Germany³.

¹ See p. 163.

² The possibility of storing at Malmoe, or in another Swedish port was rejected after examination.

³ See pp. 89 et seq. and p. 164.

(b) *Storehouses in Switzerland.*

(Setting up and organisation of storehouses.)

The registration, storage and distribution of the goods received, required the establishment on Swiss territory of large warehouses under customs control.

Geneva. — From September 1939 to the end of 1940, the sole transit agent of the ICRC was a commercial firm, which forwarded food, clothing and pharmaceutical products in its own name. For this purpose, it used its own storage premises in Geneva, in particular in the bonded stores of Rive and Cornavin.

After January 1941, the British Red Cross began regular supplies to British PW, and relief in transit for them arrived in Switzerland at an increasing rate.

Depots well suited for handling goods had to be obtained ; the bonded warehouses of Geneva, situated as they were, fulfilled these conditions. In May 1941, the ICRC came to an agreement with the *Société d'exploitation des ports-francs et des entrepôts cantonaux de Genève*. This agreement was confirmed by a convention on the existing relations between the two parties. The convention principally laid down that the *Société d'exploitation* should take delivery of all goods consigned to the ICRC, unload the wagons, sort the consignments and store them. The ICRC itself paid a monthly rent based on the stocks recorded at the end of each month, no account being taken of the actual area occupied. A lump sum payment was agreed upon for the loading and unloading of wagons. Rates were high, but they included all handling, supervision and administration expenses, and all charges for storage.

The cost of wages for the reconditioning of parcels and the actual dues charged by the Federal Railways outside the storehouses were not included in this agreement and had to be reimbursed separately.

On September 30, 1941, 8,000 tons of goods (comprising postal parcels, foodstuffs in cases and in bulk, bales of under-

wear, blankets, uniforms, cases of footwear, tobacco, etc.) occupied four-fifths of the bonded storehouses. At the same time, consignments from overseas had been notified, and others were at Lisbon and Marseilles; the space reserved at Cornavin was no longer sufficient. Furthermore, access to the Geneva warehouses could be had only by a single-track railway, which made speedy unloading of the numerous wagons impossible: these were often immobilised and could not be despatched within the usual time limits. Lastly, the administration of the warehouses was under contract to store large consignments intended for the food supply of Switzerland, and it had to limit Red Cross traffic to ten wagons a day and to a maximum warehouse content of 6,000 tons.

Vallorbe. — New premises therefore had to be sought. Thanks to the kindness and understanding of the Federal Railways and the Swiss Customs, storehouses at Vallorbe were brought into use in November, 1941. As a rule, wagons containing collective postal packages were sent from Marseilles direct to Vallorbe; these comprised at the time 11 lb food parcels from Great Britain, and crated parcels from the United States and Canada. After January 1942, bulk consignments were sent to Vallorbe, where the cost of handling and demurrage were much less than in Geneva. The administrative costs were also much lower, although an ICRC representative had to be detailed to organize and supervise the work. Lastly, the size of the premises and their good organization made it possible to centralise stocks and thus facilitate control and supervision.

At the beginning, the ICRC used only one goods shed and one engine shed; later, the Swiss and French sheds and the passenger buildings and platforms, which were specially adapted for the purpose, were occupied up to the last square foot (about 6,000 sq. metres, in all).

In order to provide storage for the continually increasing quantities of goods coming into Switzerland, and for the reserve of an additional four to five thousand tons that the donors intended to set up there, the ICRC arranged to hire premises

in Zurich and Basle ; on the rejection of a plan for using premises offered at Payerne by the Nestlé Company, a shed was erected at Vallorbe with an area of 3,300 sq. metres. This was a preliminary to large construction work.

In July 1942, the need for a new storehouse became evident. The Committee's warehousing facilities in Switzerland did not allow of the storage of more than three to four thousand tons of goods, equalling on an average the load of six to eight wagons a day at Cornavin and 20 at Vallorbe. As the warehouse facilities were exhausted and the distributing staff overworked, delays in the despatch of goods were inevitable.

Furthermore, the British Red Cross had already, in March 1942, expressed its intention of gradually setting up in Geneva a reserve of standard parcels ; in July 1942, it planned to keep a permanent ten weeks reserve supply, amounting to 1,500,000 parcels, and a floating four weeks reserve covering the current monthly distribution of 600,000 parcels. In June 1942, the American Red Cross had reported the despatch of 10,000 food parcels, which reserve it increased two months later to 25,000 parcels. The storing of these large consignments was a difficult problem, in view of the limited space available in the depots at Geneva and Vallorbe ; therefore, in September, the ICRC entered into negotiations with the *Conseil d'Etat* of Geneva, for the construction at Vernier (Geneva) of a shed similar to those which had been erected at Vallorbe.

La Renfile (Geneva). — On November 2, the ICRC agreed in principle to the construction of sheds at La Renfile. This building was raised in two portions, the first covering 3,700 sq. metres, and the second 2,600 sq. metres, the whole being calculated to take the freight of 1,200 wagons. A double railway track was laid down to serve the new buildings. It was understood that the warehouse would be managed by the ICRC, with the collaboration—which was of course indispensable—of the Customs. On May 28, 1943, the local authorities ratified these agreements and gave the ICRC possession for five years of the first shed that had been built. In 1945, the ICRC put up, at its own expense, a new building covering an area of nearly

5,000 sq. metres. On April 30, 1946, it had storage accommodation at La Renfile of about 13,500 sq. metres, with a capacity of 15,000 tons.

Bienne. — At the beginning of 1943, the ICRC leased part of the premises (3,000 sq. metres) belonging to a commercial undertaking at Bienne. These stores, able to take from 8,000 to 10,000 tons of goods, were provided with private sidings and a customs office; they were reserved for clothing and other articles from the American Red Cross.

Lausanne. — As from September 1943, the ICRC also stored clothing at Lausanne. The goods stored were subject to the same customs regulations as at Vallorbe.

Geneva. — The *Palais des Expositions* (Exhibition Hall) being in the centre of the town, exactly met the requirements for the systematic storage of a large quantity of packages. The ICRC was granted the use of this building as from April 1944. At that time 45,000 tons of relief stores, consisting of foodstuffs, medical supplies, clothing, sports gear, games, etc., were accumulated in the thirteen warehouses scattered throughout Switzerland. Thirty thousand tons more were expected, for which no accommodation had been found. Furthermore, the American Red Cross had announced its programme for the year 1944, involving an increase in the dispatch of goods amounting alone to 85,000 tons, of which hardly one-fifth had arrived in Europe. On its side, the British Red Cross had notified 60,000 tons on the basis of shipments in 1943, whilst the Red Cross Societies predicted 15 to 20,000 tons. On the other hand, the ICRC, which was short of rolling stock, was no longer able to forward goods at the same rate as before.

To facilitate the arrival of supplies at the *Palais des Expositions* and their despatch in complete wagon-loads, the Geneva Tramway Company established a temporary branch enabling wagons to unload inside the building. A service of lorries increased to the utmost the capacity of this warehouse, traffic reaching its peak at the end of 1944 and during 1945.

Basle. — At the beginning of 1944, the ICRC, which was handling about two million standard food parcels a month, hired premises in the bonded depots of Zurich, Basle and Aarau.

The bonded warehouse of Basle, which is patronised by the Chamber of Commerce of that city and controlled by the Federal authorities, offered every desirable guarantee, and its modern equipment and storage presented many advantages. It was very suitable as a transit warehouse in the distribution of goods and parcels for prisoners of war. Since this depot was regarded, from the customs point of view, as foreign territory, goods only came into contact with the customs when they left it ; while stored there, they could be unpacked, sorted and allocated free of customs supervision.

Buchs. — Some private firms sub-let to the Red Cross the few hundred square metres which they were not using. This was the case at the frontier station of Buchs, whence supplies left for Germany.

Chiasso. — In Italian Switzerland the ICRC used the depot at Chiasso, managed jointly by the Swiss Federal Railways and the Italian State Railways, and supervised by the Swiss and Italian customs. About 2,000 sq. metres were also obtained inside the bonded warehouse in this town.

France. — In January 1945, all depots both in French and German Switzerland were full ; they contained about 110,000 tons of supplies to a value of several hundred million Swiss francs. Stores continued to pour in, but, owing to air attacks on the German railways, it became impossible to send consignments to Germany. The ICRC then decided to set up temporary depots in France close to the Swiss frontier, for relief goods arriving day and night by lorry from the French capital and from local branches of the French Red Cross.

When hostilities ceased in Europe on May 8, 1945, the ICRC had in all parts of Switzerland 21 depots with a total area of about 75,000 sq. metres and a capacity of about 105,000 tons.

The four warehouses at Vallorbe, Bienne, La Renfile and the *Palais des Expositions* in Geneva were managed solely by the ICRC, which mainly employed its own staff and workers there. The other depots were merely rented.

By March 31, 1946, all the depots in Switzerland had been liquidated. The *Palais des Expositions* had been officially closed on March 12, and the only depot still in use in February 1947 was that at La Renfile, which took all the parcels intended for displaced persons and German PW still interned in Europe.

Checking, allocation and despatch of goods.

As a general rule, the depots were advised by Geneva headquarters of the arrival of wagons. After customs examination and checking of waybills, the wagons were unsealed and unloaded, and their contents verified in the presence of an ICRC representative and a customs official. This operation, which might at first appear of a routine nature, was complicated by the great variety of goods carried.

After they had been checked, the consignments were sorted according to class of goods and lots in bays for each nationality.

During sorting they were inspected for damage. Losses and spoilt goods were noted and a report on them was made to the information and enquiry services. Damaged parcels were reconditioned by a team of workmen, who repacked the sound goods.

The warehouses reported a fair number of damaged parcels ; damage especially resulted from faulty packing, unable to withstand long sea journeys. Parcels from the Near East, South Africa and North Africa, some of which reached Geneva in a very bad condition, were particularly liable to damage in this way.

In its desire to carry out its duties conscientiously and with due regard for the donors the ICRC endeavoured to salvage the greatest possible proportion of goods damaged *en route* ; the staff engaged in this work spared neither time nor trouble. The proportion of supplies damaged during storage in Switzerland was so insignificant that the donor societies ceased to insure against this risk.

Damaged consignments were sorted, according to contents and type of parcel, by the ICRC under the supervision of the Customs, the Health Service and the Cantonal Veterinary Service, which decided on the further use of the goods. Damaged stock was classed as follows :

- (1) — For refuse.
- (2) — For cattle-fodder and use as industrial waste.
- (3) — For immediate consumption.
- (4) — For delivery to the PW camps.

If the goods had been spoilt by sea-water or damaged through perforation of tins during packing, or through the action of vermin, they were delivered to the town refuse service, or destroyed in the presence of a Customs official.

Reconditioned goods which were unfit for human consumption, were sold, when suitable, in Switzerland as fodder for cattle. The money earned by the sale of waste was credited to the consignor, the price being fixed according to the state of the goods. As in the case of fodder, receipts for the sale of waste was paid to the account of the donor organization. Sale prices varied between 15 and 70 francs per 100 kilos.

Some of the goods, after health inspection, were declared fit for immediate consumption, and were distributed under a general import permit from the Customs to Swiss aid societies, hospitals, or to the poor. The *Cartel Romand* for Child Relief, and the Henry Dunant Centre at Geneva, attached to the Swiss Red Cross, sometimes benefited.

The Customs districts of Lausanne and Geneva were authorised to admit, duty free, foodstuffs still fit for consumption which were stored in the Geneva and Vallorbe warehouses, as long as they were intended solely for charitable distribution. The recipients were required to give written undertakings to the Customs not to sell the goods, but to use them solely for their own purposes. They then gave a receipt to the Custom which authorised the clearance.

These provisions applied in respect of Geneva, Vallorbe, and subsequently Basle, Zurich and Chiasso.

Other goods were sold under agreements between the ICRC, the Customs and the Federal Wartime Food Office. Such was the case particularly with the contents of the French family parcels warehoused at Geneva (*Palais* and Cornavin), which had to be rehabilitated before delivery to the consumer. These goods were sold to private firms, who then made arrangements with the Swiss authorities regarding the conditions of sale. The ICRC credited the donor with the proceeds. Provisions sold in Switzerland for immediate consumption, exchanged for other goods intended for export, or kept as payment for services, were subject to customs duties and the usual taxes, in accordance with a decision taken by the Swiss Customs at Berne on May 7, 1945.

The foodstuffs in damaged parcels which would bear further transport were reconditioned and sent in bulk ; they were shipped in crates, each filled as far as possible with the same type of goods, and were forwarded to PW as supplementary rations. The ICRC instructed its staff at the warehouses to use separate packings, rather than put standard parcels retrieved intact from cartons into the same cases as reconditioned supplies in bulk. Individual parcels damaged in any way could not be forwarded in that state, and were also reconditioned. Supplies unfit for consumption were taken out, and provisions which could be saved were packed in cases by type of article, thus avoiding the excessive cost of making up fresh parcels.

Clothing was rarely damaged. If in irreparable condition, it was sent to the rag merchants ; if damaged but still wearable, it was repaired and given to welfare institutions.

Allocation and shipment of goods.

After inspection, the ICRC and the Customs were advised of the arrival of the goods by means of warehouse certificates ¹, indicating the place of origin, the nature, number and weight of the provisions, and other essential particulars. Damage

¹ See specimen in the volume of Annexes.

and shortages were recorded and confirmed in writing. The goods thus made available to the relevant services of the ICRC were easier to divide and despatch ¹.

On receipt of the shipping orders ², transport and customs papers, the warehouse staff loaded the wagons, in the presence of a customs inspector and an ICRC tally-man, and in exact accordance with the allocation scheme. Shipments conformed strictly to the order of arrival of the goods, those which had been delivered first leaving first. Where absolutely necessary owing to lack of storage space, arrival of large quantities of goods, requests for important shipments, or shortage of stocks, the parcels were transferred direct from the wagon on which they arrived to that on which they left. The ICRC authorised this procedure only in extremely urgent cases.

Once loading was completed, an ICRC foreman and a railway official checked the closing of the doors and windows ; the customs inspector affixed the seals and noted the number of each wagon ; the railway official then checked the seals, and fastened insecure doors and shutters with official cord. The goods then left for Germany, Italy and France.

(c) — *Warehouses abroad.*

North Africa. — In the last months of 1942, the ICRC opened depots at Algiers and Casablanca as assembly points for all consignments for British, Polish, Norwegian, Dutch and Belgian civilian internees, and for German PW. At Algiers, a Swiss national was appointed assistant-delegate and placed in charge of the local depot ; another Swiss resident in Casablanca served as warehouse manager in this port.

A large depot was opened at Cairo, where the Committee's delegation had to meet requests for supplies from PW and civil internees who were either in permanent camps in Egypt, or awaiting transfer to British India or the Dominions. In these countries reserve stocks were built up with regular con-

¹ See p. 277.

² See specimen in the volume of Annexes.

signments from the German Red Cross. (The same applied to the United States, although the needs were not urgent, as PW were given adequate food and clothing by the authorities.)

France. — During the early months of German occupation, the Paris delegate proposed setting up a bonded warehouse, emphasising in support of his request the difficult situation of the detainees in assembly centres, who received quite irregularly the parcels sent to them direct from Geneva. The scheme did not become effective until March 1943, when the first consignment of 10 tons of British and American food and clothing was delivered to the Paris warehouse. This depot was reserved for ICRC consignments to PW, civil internees, detainees in minor camps, in hospital or in forced residence, to whom complete wagons of supplies could not be sent. The premises were located in a former warehouse of the French Red Cross, who gave the ICRC the free use of about 80 cubic metres. That Society also assisted the delegate by transporting supplies from the station to the warehouse, handling and despatching the goods to camps or hospitals free of charge. The Committee's expenses consisted in gratuities for the staff.

As practically no packing material was available locally, the large civilian internment camps of the Northern zone sent the empty packings of consignments from Geneva back to the Paris warehouse. The ICRC forwarded standard British, American, Indian and Egyptian food parcels, and tobacco, cigarettes, footwear and clothing to Paris. Consignments from North Africa, intended for North African PW interned in France, were sent direct from Marseilles. The stocks available on the liberation of France were distributed in accordance with instructions from the donors and the Allied Supreme Command.

Great Britain. — Until the autumn of 1942, the British Red Cross made store-rooms available to the ICRC, where postal parcels from the German and Italian Red Cross were stacked pending distribution. A reserve food supply was constituted against winter emergencies, but the regular relief

consignments to camps went on. The store-room reserved for the ICRC thus served as a permanent depot. The delegation provided its own staff for packing and despatch. The British Post Office were instructed to send to the depot all parcels of any size which bore no camp number. The British Red Cross also undertook all warehousing formalities, thus lightening the delegation's task.

At the beginning of 1945, the quantity of German Red Cross supplies sent to London grew to such proportions that it became difficult to find storage room. The British authorities allowed the Committee's delegation in London to open store rooms at Camp No 7, in Devonshire, which was of easy access. It was decided that the receiving, sorting, warehousing and distribution of parcels should be done by PW volunteers. In compensation for their loss of pay, the camp commandant authorized the delegation to hand an equivalent lump sum to the camp welfare funds.

*Italy*¹. — During the summer of 1942, the ICRC delegate had a reserve supply of parcels at Rome, but this was soon exhausted and was not renewed.

So long as PW camps in Italy were known to the ICRC only by their numbers, without indication as to locality, relief supplies had to be addressed to the *Commando della difesa territoriale* at Milan, a military administration which acted as intermediary between the ICRC and the Italian Red Cross and the military authorities. The *Commando* both supervised and distributed supplies amongst the camps; distribution was made according to directions from the Italian Red Cross.

In accordance with an agreement with the authorities, civilian internee camps were however supplied direct from Geneva. The ICRC informed the Italian Red Cross of all its consignments, in order to ascertain, as numbers increased or decreased, what quantities were required for each particular camp; reserve stocks were thus no longer necessary.

¹ See also pp. 67 et seq.

At the beginning of 1944, in view of the increasing number of requests from Allied PW and internees, and on being informed by the Rome delegation that rail consignments could not go farther than Florence, the ICRC decided to set up stocks of food and clothing in Northern Italy at their sub-delegation of Ponte San Pietro (Bergamo). The German and Italian authorities both consented to the forwarding of wagons to the new depot, conveying relief supplies for American, British, French, Yugoslav and Greek PW and internees, or *isolati*. Supplies were stored under the direct supervision of the delegate, whom the ICRC left free to effect distributions in accordance with the general conditions reigning in the country; supplies to camps, in particular, were forwarded by motor lorries.

A few months later, the ICRC shut down the Ponte San Pietro depot, as the locality was too exposed to air attacks; food and clothing were thereafter sent to Chiasso, on the Italo-Swiss frontier, for distribution in the PW camps of North Italy, and in prisons.

Greece. — Supplies for Allied PW, war-disabled and Greek detainees were concentrated in the depots at Athens, the Piraeus and Salonika. In 1944, the delegation held very large stocks for disabled, seriously wounded and tubercular cases. To prevent an accumulation of perishable goods, it was proposed to issue part to security detainees in prisons and concentration camps, the distribution being made under the control of the Committee's delegates, who could pay regular visits to these persons. The ICRC suggested to donors and the blockade authorities that one-fifth of the monthly consignments should be set aside for this purpose; this was agreed.

During the civil war of 1944, 24,785 Canadian food parcels stored in the "Evrotas" Mills in the Piraeus were completely destroyed.

In 1945, with the consent of the donors, parcels were distributed to homeless persons whose villages had been burnt down, and to welfare institutions.

Yugoslavia. — At the end of January 1944, British and American airmen from Salonika were interned in Belgrade,

pending an opportunity to transfer them to PW camps in Germany. These men usually arrived exhausted and, as they came from the South, lightly clad. The ICRC delegation in Yugoslavia on their behalf called for a stock of clothing, underwear, shoes, blankets, toilet articles and medicaments. The ICRC set up a depot in Belgrade, in the charge of their delegate, who made issues of these articles to the camps and hospitals.

In November, the Committee's delegate informed the British and American military missions with the Yugoslav liberation forces that he had in Belgrade a large stock of food parcels and clothing from British and American sources. At the request of these two missions, the major part of the reserve stores was handed to the Yugoslav Red Cross, to assist distressed Yugoslav nationals. A small stock of each article was put aside by the ICRC for needy American and British nationals residing in Yugoslavia, and for Allied ex-prisoners of war and refugees.

Germany. — Early in 1944, the ICRC set up a reserve stock of about 10,000 parcels, of which four-fifths were standard food parcels and the remainder medical parcels, provided equally by the American and British Red Cross Societies. These parcels were stored at the Swiss Legation in Berlin and in premises provided by Swiss nationals. From time to time thereafter the delegate received supplies for urgent and special cases, for instance, British or American PW or internees detained individually in civil prisons.

Torgau. — In May 1944, the British camp leader at Stalag 344, Lamsdorf, the largest British PW camp, suggested that a central distribution centre should be set up in Germany. The German authorities approved the creation of a central depot for all nationalities, for the exclusive use of the ICRC. They proposed that the depot should be at Torgau, a fortified town on the banks of the Elbe ; its central position (south-west of Berlin) would allow supplies to be sent to all the camps of the river, i.e. to about 750,000 PW. However, conditions

in the Torgau sector became too uncertain and the ICRC finally had to abandon the idea.

Lübeck. — On the offer of the German authorities, this port was used by the vessels on the Baltic shuttle service between Sweden and Germany, and it now became an important supply centre for the Northern camps. The Committee sent a special delegate to supervise the unloading of cargoes, and to issue supplies to PW of each nationality, as directed by the Gothenburg delegation. The goods were carried by the motor lorries with which the ICRC equipped its delegations in Germany, or by rail, whenever possible. The Lübeck depot also supplied the camps in the military regions (*Wehrkreise*) II, III, IV, VI, IX, X and XI.

Moosburg. — After March 1945, consignments from Switzerland were sent to Stalag VII A, at Moosburg (Bavaria). This camp could still be reached by rail, or by road, and become the central relief depot to the camps in South Germany¹.

Ravensburg. — This place, situated north-east of Lake Constance and about ten miles from the Swiss frontier, was also an important distributing centre at this time. A well-equipped warehouse accommodated stocks which arrived by two rail routes, one from Constance, the other from Bregenz. When rail transport was impracticable, supplies were sent by road. Within a radius of some 180 miles from Ravensburg, lorries delivered supplies to PW and concentration camps; to this effect, the ICRC delegate had created a stock pool. In spite of military events, the Ravensburg centre continued after May to be of the utmost importance in supplying PW in neighbouring territory not yet occupied by the Allies, as well as those who had been released, but whose repatriation was meeting with difficulties.

Austria. — Similar action was taken, during the second fortnight in April, at Landeck in the Tyrol, near the Arlberg

¹ See p. 92.

Pass. Columns of PW, evacuated by the German authorities from Lower and Upper Austria were moving towards the Tyrol and the Passau and Braunau regions. The ICRC ascertained that some thousands of PW were in Landeck, a camp previously attached to Stalag XVIII C at Markt-Pongau. Two block-trainloads were stocked in the village. The ICRC would have wished to take large-scale action, but its motor vehicles could only move with difficulty in this mountainous region, where roads were few and in very bad condition. By June, stocks in Landeck had all been issued and the centre was closed, since further consignments by block-train or lorry were impossible.

5. DISTRIBUTION BY NATIONALITY

From the beginning, the donors entrusted their individual or collective gifts to the care of the ICRC on the one essential condition that distribution to PW should be according to nationality. In some cases this rule gave rise to highly intricate problems.

(a) — *Polish Prisoners of War*

The Detaining Powers considered as Polish PW all officers and men captured by the German forces in 1939-40. Consequently, all those who had fought under Ridz-Smigly were looked upon as Polish, including the "Volksdeutsche" (or racial Germans), and the Ruthenians and Ukrainians who had been Polish since 1918. For this reason, the ICRC was unable to inform Ukrainian and Ruthenian donors where these ethnical groups were interned or what was their camp strength, and had to ask them to allow of distribution without discrimination to all PW whom the Axis Powers designated as Polish.

After the 1939 campaign, some 400,000 men of the Polish forces managed to reach France, via the then neutral territories of Rumania and Italy. A Polish army was reconstituted in France under General Sikorski and thenceforth fought on the

Franco-German front. On the other hand, part of the many thousand Polish workers employed in France before the war, particularly as miners, had been mobilised as French nationals, whilst others joined the Sikorski army. Thus, after the 1940 campaign in France, there were three classes of Polish prisoners in Germany: (1) those captured during the Polish campaign, (2) those from the French army and (3) those who had belonged to the forces under General Sikorski.

The German military authorities decided to consider as Polish prisoners all those captured on the Eastern Front (*Ostpolen*), and as French prisoners those taken on the Western Front (*Westpolen*), regardless of the forces (French Army or Sikorski units) to which they belonged. This apparently simple measure was the source of much confusion. When the camps for French prisoners of war included small numbers of Western Poles, the French camp leader supplied them with the same commodities as his compatriots. When in large numbers, the Polish prisoners elected Polish camp leaders, who could claim part of the relief supplies intended for the French. The French authorities approved this arrangement, but the Eastern Poles, who received no parcels in 1940 and 1941, did not consider it fair that their compatriots should be given relief supplies while they had none. From 1943 and until the end of 1944, however, the Eastern Poles alone received American Red Cross standard parcels, provided by Polish welfare organizations in the USA, and the Western Poles complained in their turn to the ICRC.

On several occasions the ICRC proposed to the German authorities that they should merge *Ostpolen* and *Westpolen* in a single national group, where all Poles would be subject to the same treatment and would receive the same collective relief. The German authorities refused to revise their first general settlement and throughout the war continued to ascribe to prisoners of war the nationality of the army in which they were serving at the time of capture.

(b) — *British Prisoners of War*

The British Red Cross made no discrimination between the various nationals of the Commonwealth. Regard was had to nationality only in some cases ; for instance, the Indian PW, for whom special parcels were made up. Further, British merchant seamen, whatever their nationality, were regarded as naval personnel. As the German and Italian military authorities, for purposes of relief, ascribed to these crews the nationality of the flag under which they sailed, this decision raised no difficulties. Thus, in one camp for marine personnel, which contained 54 different nationalities, the prisoners were considered as British subjects, and all shared in collective relief.

Early in 1943, the German and Italian camps began to receive groups of PW from the " Free Forces " (units formed in exile and composed of French, Czechoslovaks, Jugoslavs, Norwegians, Greeks, and so on), who were placed with the British and American prisoners, and in whose behalf the British Red Cross gave the Committee the following information.

" For relief purposes, the following prisoners of war should be considered as British :

(1) — Those who had taken the oath of allegiance to the King, and were thereby legally part of the British armed forces. They should include :

(a) — Those who had sworn allegiance to the King only (for instance, members of the French Navy who entered the Royal Navy in 1940, the Belgian Section of the Royal Navy, and persons of various nationalities incorporated in the Forces) ;

(b) — Members of Allied national air forces, sworn in by their own State and enrolled in the Belgian and Czechoslovak Air Forces, who were also members of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve ;

(2) — Members of Allied Forces, reconstituted with British aid and under British authority, in the period since the occu-

pation of their national territory, forming the land, sea and air forces of Allied Governments temporarily established in Great Britain.

Prisoners of this last category should have the same standing as British nationals for the purpose of food and clothing supplies only in so far as they are separated by the Detaining Power from their compatriots who were taken prisoner while defending their national territory."

(c) — *French Prisoners of War*

The French authorities and Red Cross adopted the same standpoint as the British Red Cross : any man taken prisoner while fighting under the French flag was to receive the same supplies as those given to French prisoners. The only distinction was that made for Colonial troops, the majority of whom were, after approaches had been made by the ICRC, collected by the German authorities during 1942 and 1943 in "Front-stalags" in France, where the climate was more suitable. The Central Directorate for Prisoners of War at Lyons, which distributed supplies, was aware of these camps and gave them priority for material sent by the Red Cross in Algiers, the French Red Cross in Morocco and the *Fraternité de guerre* at Rabat, by donors in French West Africa, Egypt and Syria.

Besides the usual commodities, these consignments included couscous, dates, dried figs, etc., and they were usually distributed in original packing. Extra collective supplies had to be provided for French PW of colonial origin, to replace the family parcels which were regularly received by French metropolitan prisoners. The majority of families in Senegal and Morocco were unable to make up and despatch such parcels. In these cases also, the collective gifts from Africa were very useful.

The most important point in regard to distinction between French PW was that of the treatment of men belonging to the Allied Forces reconstituted by General de Gaulle, afterwards called the Army of the National Liberation Committee. The first large parties of prisoners in this category were notified

to the ICRC in 1943. The Italian authorities considered that these men formed a special category of French PW, the "Gaul-listi", whereas the German authorities informed the ICRC that they considered these prisoners as British or American. No difficulties with regard to relief supplies ensued from these conflicting views, the British authorities having agreed to send relief through the ICRC, on the same basis as to nationals of the Commonwealth, to men of the reconstituted French Forces, whether in British or Gaullist units.

(d) — *Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, Greek, Dutch and Norwegian PW*

Czechoslovak prisoners of war were of various origins :

(1) — *Volunteers in the British Forces.* Many Czechoslovak nationals were in the Royal Air Force.

(2) — *Volunteers in the American Forces.* Their exact numbers were never known, particularly as the US Forces included a great many men of Czechoslovak origin who had become American citizens.

(3) — *Volunteers in the French Army.* The Foreign Legion contained a large proportion of the foreign volunteers in the French Army.

(4) — "*Volksdeutsche*" from *Czechoslovakia.* After the annexation in 1939, these men were considered as German nationals and were mobilised in the German Forces, in particular the *Waffen-SS*. In captivity, they were given the same relief supplies as German PW.

The situation of Slovak nationals was indefinite ; some fought with and others against the Allied Forces ; their case therefore belongs to the general problem of partisans.

Czechoslovaks serving in the French, British and American forces were given relief in the same way as all other foreigners in those armies. Those belonging to reconstituted Allied troops were treated in accordance with the above-mentioned principles adopted by the British Government.

The same treatment was given to the Yugoslav, Greek, Norwegian and Dutch nationals in the French, British and American Forces.

(e) — *Other nationalities*

All armed forces in conflict comprised individuals or small groups of various nationalities ; Spanish, Portuguese, Turks, Swiss, Armenians, Egyptians, Swedes and stateless persons, who fought with the French, British, American, Italian and German forces. They were usually given the same relief as their comrades with whom they were taken prisoner. Their applications to the ICRC were particularly for individual and family parcels ; they asked to be placed in contact with donors and appealed to legations, consulates and various welfare associations.

The situation of civilian internees from South American States was also very confused, especially as a great many citizens of Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Haiti, for instance, were of European origin and in most cases Jews from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania or Poland, who had acquired the other nationalities. Here again, the main difficulty was that of individual relief.

(f) — *Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian
Prisoners of War*

In the early years of the war, the nationals of these three countries fought with the German and Italian forces (if they followed the official policy of their Governments) and remained as separate groups among Axis PW, receiving relief from their consulates or legations. On several occasions, the ICRC urged the German Red Cross to supply these prisoners, when they were isolated or in small groups.

Before the change of policy in these countries, however, some of their nationals had decided to fight on the Allied side. In these cases, the problem of their relief was similar to that of partisans of all nationalities.

It is extremely difficult to give precise details of the efforts made by the Committee to assist partisans. Aid for partisans in captivity was contingent upon their treatment by the Detaining Power. Those enlisted in the Allied Forces were considered as members of these forces. When they formed military or paramilitary associations in their own countries, they were considered, when captured by the Germans, as political prisoners. Their position in regard to relief was then the same as that of detainees in concentration camps, or in prisons under police control. They were generally unknown to the ICRC and therefore beyond assistance until the closing months of the war ¹.

Among internees of indefinite status there was a very large group of Italian military internees designated as "Badoglisti"; these were not, as a general rule, sent to concentration camps, but were attached to PW camps. However, they were not allowed relief in the same manner as regular combatants ².

§ 6. ARRIVAL OF RELIEF SUPPLIES IN PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS

Germany. — The majority of prisoners of war in Germany were held in camps dispersed over 17 sectors (*Wehrkreise*). In April 1944 there were, apart from Russian PW, 1,850,000 prisoners in all, housed in 60 camps for NCOs and men, and 25 camps for officers, with a few orderlies. In general, each camp had an administrative centre where about 10% of the prisoners and the spokesmen of each nationality were occupied. The remainder were in the numerous labour detachments of the main camp, sometimes several hundred kilometres away. The camps usually included an infirmary and one or several hospitals. Some of the largest camps, with several thousand prisoners, were composed of a base camp and satellite camps, called *Zweiglager*.

¹ See pp. 73 et seq.

² See p. 68.

The German authorities tried to group prisoners by nationality, with only partial success. Some camps were set aside for members of the sea and air forces ; one of these was Stalag Luft III, near Sagan-on-Bober, in Lower Silesia, where American and British airmen, including Dominion personnel, were accommodated after the opening of the camp in 1942. In June 1944, the camp contained 12,989 airmen.

The camp leader's task of distributing relief supplies to thousands of prisoners was often overwhelming and one not always in relation to his rank and experience. Thus, a student of 26, a corporal in the French forces, acted as camp leader for 26,000 men, to whom he issued supplies during the entire war. In the largest British camp, Stalag 344, the camp leader was a warrant officer of the Regular Army, and was responsible for the supplies to 50,000 men.

At the base camps, the spokesmen had to organise the distribution of supplies to hundreds of labour detachments and to men in hospitals. Auxiliary stores of food and tobacco had to be set up to facilitate issues. Supplies to French PW were distributed by lorries furnished by the French Red Cross.

The number of men in hospital was regularly communicated to Geneva and the supplies for their use were sent to the spokesmen with directions as to the hospitals to which they should be delivered. As the strength (and even the existence) of some infirmaries and hospitals were unknown to the ICRC, bulk supplies were sent to the spokesman, who apportioned them according to the number of patients and their requirements. TB cases were, as far as possible, placed in separate hospitals. Diet being most important in the treatment of these cases, it was fortunately possible to supplement the German basic rations by issues of sugar, honey, powdered milk, fats and rice, in addition to the ordinary food parcels. Cod-liver oil from South Africa and highly vitaminised yeast preparations were also given. The British Red Cross moreover supplied each man with 6 oz. of dried bananas and rice weekly.

Particular care was taken in sending relief to PW undergoing disciplinary detention in the prisons at Torgau, Graudenz and GERMERSHEIM. They received the same treatment as German

military personnel undergoing similar punishment and were consequently permitted only to receive clothing. As their food was inadequate, the ICRC requested the German Government to allow these men to share in relief supplies ; a settlement was made in July 1944, and each detainee was thenceforth allowed to have one parcel monthly.

The spokesmen were in close contact with the ICRC delegates and could obtain advice on all questions concerning distribution, proprietary rights in supplies, etc. Their letters described their problems and, while giving useful and varied information, also made suggestions for meeting their difficulties.

Whereas the food supply problem was solved by 1942, that of clothing was more difficult. The following are a few extracts taken at random from delegates' reports on camp visits in 1942 :

" It was noticed during camp visits that the state of PW clothing was a serious matter... Mending material was everywhere short.... Garments taken as war booty or from collective consignments are withdrawn from PW who receive clothing from their next of kin... Shoes are no longer issued, even to British PW... In labour detachments the employer is supposed to provide working boots when footwear is worn out. A great many employers cannot obtain any... The French PW are still wearing the same trousers... The most acute question is that of footwear... Ninety per cent of the men in labour detachments have only one pair of socks... The spokesman states that the men have been given no blankets by the Germans. Twenty per cent have no blankets at all. Thirty-three per cent have only one blanket. Forty-seven per cent have two... For eighteen months the camp spokesman has been vainly trying to obtain new blankets in place of the old..."

The spokesmen also kept the Committee informed of their anxiety about black-market activities and the replacement of stocks destroyed by bombing. For instance, the Belgian spokesman at Stalag XI B wrote on October 11, 1943 :

" In all farm detachments the Canadian parcels for the September issue have been withdrawn ; this is an exceptional measure, and applies to all the detachments of the Stalag. It was required for the following reasons :

(1) — It is common knowledge that the food position in farm detachments is better than in many industrial detachments. The thousand Canadian food parcels recovered in September are to provide for some particularly bad industrial detachments, and to give extra rations to those who are really in need. Our thorough knowledge of the food conditions in each detachment tells us the true requirements of some of the men.

(2) — During their visit to Stalag XI B in August last, the ICRC delegates remarked that it might be well to make a distinction between farm and industrial labour detachments, as the prisoners in the former were using the contents of Canadian and American parcels for black-market purposes to an undesirable degree—a fact which has been obvious to us for some time. We followed the delegates' advice, and the disappointment shown by Detachment 1443 at the removal of the September Canadian parcels is precisely due to the fact that a large black-market is practised there".

It will be seen by this report that the camp leaders, acting sometimes on the delegates' advice, stepped in to prevent abuses. Their action resulted in the maintenance of proper discipline and prevented the detaining authorities from taking sudden and injurious decisions.

Air bombardment. — From 1943 onwards, conditions in the majority of camps in Germany were disrupted, or at least severely impaired, by air attacks which destroyed quantities of relief stores. The camp leaders in bombed camps applied to the ICRC for new consignments and for the replacement of indispensable stocks.

Prohibition of camp reserves. — This extremely important question has already been dealt with in the chapter on the general problems relating to Allied PW of all nationalities in Germany. It is impossible to quote here all the appeals from base camps and labour detachments. The prisoners were quite aware that the measure endangered their health or even, towards the end of the war when communications steadily deteriorated, their lives.

* * *

As an illustration of life in the camps, we conclude this account with extracts from correspondence exchanged between the camp leader of Stalag X A (Schleswig) and Geneva. This camp contained over 20,000 French PW and a large number of other Allied PW. Compared to camps in Germany as a whole, it may be considered as of average standard. Relief distributions were on the whole satisfactory, although the usual difficulties were present.

Camp Leader to ICRC (October 5, 1941).

Owing to reorganization and a marked reduction in the number of French PW in the camp, the great majority of labour detachments still remaining are on farm work. Biscuit, formerly one of the chief necessities, is no longer in urgent demand. All surplus stocks of biscuit were formerly sent to industrial detachments, but these are now in minority. We should therefore be glad if you would reduce consignments of biscuit and all other shipments in general.

Camp Leader to ICRC (November 13, 1941).

All Red Cross consignments are distributed to the camp, the detachments and the hospitals. Further, in corresponding with detachments, I learn which are in greatest need and am able to give them priority.

Camp Leader to ICRC (March 18, 1942).

The living quarters of one detachment have been entirely destroyed by fire, and 21 French PW were unable to save any of their clothing. They now have no underclothing, and as the German replacements will not cover their losses, I have taken up their case. I should be grateful if you would bring the matter to the notice of the French authorities, so that the required articles, namely, shirts, pants, socks, pullovers and slippers may be sent.

Camp Leader to ICRC (May 5, 1942).

Clothing is inadequate in the camp and in most of the labour detachments. In Detachment No 605, some of the men are employed in the tanneries of a leather works. In this job, it is impossible to avoid getting one's feet wet. The works managements supplied rubber boots to twenty men, but cannot furnish more as rubber is so scarce. We should be most grateful if the ICRC could supply Detachment No 605 with about thirty pairs of rubber boots.

Camp Leader to ICRC (July 3, 1942).

Most wagonloads of family parcels from Lyons arrive in very poor condition ; the parcels are crushed, broken open and otherwise damaged. The cause seems to lie in rough handling during loading and *en route*. We should be glad if you would make sure that the necessary preventive steps are taken in France.

Camp Leader to ICRC (November. 6, 1942).

Sick prisoners in camp, and some industrial detachments badly need some milk. The French Red Cross, to whom we have already turned, has sent a quantity which is quite inadequate to meet requirements. The men fully realise the difficulties now existing in France, and for this reason I take the liberty of applying to you.

Camp Leader to ICRC (May 18, 1943).

Since December 1942, the Polish Legionaries have shared equally with the French in collective gifts from the Red Cross.

Camp Leader to ICRC (June 22, 1943).

According to instructions from you dated January 15, 1943, I have today despatched to Cornavin Station, Geneva, a wagon containing all empty packing cases recovered to date. I shall take all necessary steps to prepare a second wagon in the near future.

Camp Leader to ICRC (August 26, 1943).

Bau- und Arbeitsbataillon No 10 has sustained damage during the bombing of the Hamburg area. All their effects, including food and clothing, have been destroyed. Please send to this camp as soon as possible an extra wagonload of food and the usual clothing supplies for this emergency.

Camp Leader to ICRC (March 15, 1944).

We have received 200 bags of lentils sent by the French Red Cross at Beirut, for which the men are most grateful. The general receipt has already been returned to you.

ICRC to Camp Leader (April 5, 1944).

The first lots of parcels from Morocco are being despatched. Unlike the Algerian parcels, these parcels are from anonymous donors and are for issue by you to all French PW from North Africa under your charge.

Camp Leader to ICRC (November 14, 1944).

In my letter dated October 30, 1944, I informed you of the loss through bombing of 43 tons of goods intended for French PW in Hamburg.

To help their comrades, who were all in industrial detachments, the men at once emptied their stores and sent off two wagons; one of these, containing 2,116 American parcels, was despatched on November 4, and arrived the following week. Nothing is known of the second wagon. As we now have no reserves whatever, we are quite unable to provide relief supplies, either for the men at Hamburg or for the full camp strength at Stalag X A.

Camp Leader to ICRC (November 28, 1944).

Collective consignments: — The French in industrial detachments received one American parcel per man for October, and half a Canadian parcel per man for September. The French Red Cross sent sardines, tinned meat and fruit paste for industrial detachments. The German High Command's prohibition of food reserves is strictly applied in this camp but we have, however, managed to keep a fairly large stock of tinned foods for the sick.

Camp Leader to ICRC (November 28, 1944).

The last issue of American parcels took place in October. In view of the losses notified and should the present rate of arrivals continue, I cannot expect to make another issue before the end of January, 1945. Each man receives a parcel every two months; the situation at present is extremely difficult, owing to the fact that out of the 21,000 French in Stalag X A, 8,500 are employed in industry. Only rapid replacement of lost stocks will provide the men with relief supplies which, you will understand, are urgently required. Just over nine wagonloads every two months are required to ensure a supply of one parcel per man.

ICRC to Camp Leader (January 12, 1945).

With regard to supplies for French PW camps, large consignments have arrived which are being distributed. We have sent off from Lübeck nine wagons, each of 637 cartons of four American parcels apiece; and one wagon containing 644 cartons of four parcels each, to cover the months of September and October 1944.

We are now once again receiving food supplies from France, not in bulk as before, but in standard five-kilo parcels.

ICRC to PW complaining about unfair distribution by his Camp Leader (March 27, 1945).

The supply of food to PW in Germany has generally become very serious of late ; this of course has led to hitches in monthly issues. It is therefore quite possible that some detachments may not receive the supplies they expect, owing to the fact that these have not arrived at the base camps, or only after delays which may run into weeks or months.

This situation is caused by the almost total suspension of rail traffic, and we are trying to meet it by sending supplies by road. We are making every effort in the present very uncertain and changeable conditions to continue the supply of relief to PW of all nationalities.

Similar extracts could be given of correspondence exchanged with Stalag 344, the largest camp for British PW in Germany ; as early as 1943, it contained over 21,000 men. Correspondence with this camp was heavy, as the British Red Cross was able to provide a weekly parcel for each man, as well as large amounts of clothing.

* * *

Italy. — Arrangements for the delivery of supplies to camps in Italy were, except for details, the same as those in Germany. The Committee's difficulties in distribution arose from military events ¹.

Rumania. — This was also true of relief supplies in Balkan countries under Axis control, where the same principles of distribution applied as in Central Europe, but where difficulties directly caused by military operations were encountered.

One instance of this was the case of the American airmen interned in Rumania in 1943. Although the numbers involved were only 810, the ICRC found the difficulties of supply about equal to those for thousands of men assembled in one camp in Germany. On Aug. 24, 1943, the Committee's delegation in Bucharest sent a telegram notifying the arrival of 110 American

¹ See pp. 67 et seq.

prisoners, 69 of whom were wounded ; all of them lacked the kind of clothing they would need for captivity, in face of the oncoming winter : greatcoats, shoes, warm underclothing, pullovers, gloves, socks, scarves, toilet requisites and cigarettes had to be provided. The first supplies were despatched on September 7. On September 18 the Bucharest Delegation stated that the men had been transferred to Timis, and that food supplies should be sent, since their pay was not sufficient for them to buy the extra food they needed.

On September 20 the Geneva representative of the American Red Cross granted authority to send them invalid parcels in addition to food parcels. On November 10 the ICRC informed its Bucharest delegation that a wagonload of food had been sent off to the Rumanian Red Cross. On November 19 the Committee added that the clothing was ready, but had not yet been despatched through lack of wagons. On November 22 a telegram from Bucharest reported the American prisoners' great disappointment over the absence of clothing on the wagon which arrived at Bucharest on November 9. In view of this delay, the Rumanian Red Cross lent the American prisoners 120 greatcoats, trousers, and pairs of shoes, and 240 shirts and towels, pending the arrival of supplies from Geneva. On the same day the Committee sent word that a wagonload of clothing and food had been despatched.

On December 7, the Bucharest delegate reported on his visits to the camp at Timisul de Jos and Sinaia Hospital. On behalf of the PW he asked for sports gear, games, 120 tooth-brushes and a second blanket for each man. He added that the prisoners at Timis and Brosos included five Jugoslavs and four British, who were also entitled to regular supplies, and requested the ICRC to prepare further consignments.

In May 1944, the Bucharest delegate reported a regular increase in the number of American airmen captured ; fourteen of the new arrivals were in hospital and required special relief. In April 1944, the total had increased by 145 airmen. The Committee thereupon despatched several wagonloads of relief, but rail communications with Rumania were temporarily cut during the month of August.

On September 20, 1944, American and British PW were released and repatriated. As the stocks in Bucharest could not be removed to another country the ICRC referred to the American Red Cross, who authorised the delegate to distribute the supplies jointly with the American Mission in Rumania and the Rumanian Red Cross. On March 30, 1945, one-fourth of the stocks were handed to the Russian Red Cross for distribution to Soviet wounded in Rumania, and three-quarters to the Rumanian Red Cross for sharing between the hospitals and civil population of Moldavia and Northern Transylvania.

Occupied France. — Relief activities for the "Frontstalags" for Colonial French, Poles and a few British airmen in occupied France and in Belgium and occupied Holland were similar to those undertaken in Germany.

Greece. — Activities in Greece have been described in the chapter concerning relief in the Balkans.

Norway. — In 1943 the ICRC were obliged to extend their activities to Norway, on being informed that detachments of Polish and Yugoslav prisoners in the hands of the German SS and until then considered as political detainees, had been "ceded" to the *Wehrmacht*, and were therefore entitled to PW status and relief supplies. There were about 1,750 Poles and 1,700 Yugoslavs in labour detachments dispersed between Egersund, in the South-East, and Narvik, in the North. The Yugoslavs had been captured while fighting with partisan units. On visiting the detachments in the summer of 1943, the delegate observed that they were short of warm underclothing, boots, uniforms and greatcoats and urgently needed food supplies. The Committee arranged with overseas donors to draw from the Yugoslav and Polish stocks received through the American Red Cross, and distributed one American food parcel a month to each man.

These men, whose state of health was particularly bad, also received rice, beans and lentils from welfare organizations in Cairo. Clothing, too, was sent, particularly to the sick and wounded in hospital. A small reserve was set up on the pre-

mises of the Norwegian Red Cross in Oslo, from which supplies could be drawn as required. A monthly ration of 210 cigarettes per man (equivalent to that of PW in Germany) was also issued to all camps, even in the extreme North.

* * *

German and Italian Prisoners of War

Overseas. — In general, relief supplies for German and Italian PW overseas arrived without incident or noticeable loss, but with great delay. A good many requests for relief took three to four months to reach Geneva, and some convoys travelled from four to eight months before reaching their destination. This caused considerable inconvenience, especially where perishable goods or urgently needed medicaments were expected. Accordingly, delegations were often asked to provide relief, if possible with local purchases.

As a general rule, the Allied Detaining Powers supplied sufficient quantities of food and clothing. Most Italian and German camp leaders stated that the men were not in need of foodstuffs; only vegetables and fresh fruit were occasionally lacking. Their main requirements were books, sports gear and educational matter.

Great Britain. — After October 1939, the ICRC had a small number of German PW in Great Britain under its care. The authorities gave their sanction and support to the establishment of a Prisoners' Welfare Committee representing the British Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A., the Churches and Jewish religious organizations. This Committee supplied prisoners with daily necessities, such as tooth-brushes, tooth-paste and soap, when these could not be provided by camp canteens. It also set up dental centres and supplied medical kits and some surgical instruments. The Committee kept the ICRC informed of its work and transmitted requests to which it could not give effect.

German and Italian PW in Great Britain received the same military rations as British troops and were given used uniforms, dyed brown or green, with distinctive markings. Spare underclothing arrived fairly regularly in family parcels and German Red Cross gifts, sent through the post. A small fund held by the Committee's delegation in London and maintained by the German Red Cross was used to meet the urgent needs of the wounded or sick.

After the military operations in North Africa and Italy, several transit camps were set up in Great Britain for German PW awaiting transfer to the United States or Canada. They arrived just as they had been captured, in light uniforms, and suffered greatly from the cold. As their transit stay was not long enough for any relief scheme to be undertaken in their favour, the ICRC appealed to the Detaining Powers to improve their living conditions, and to the German Red Cross to send winter uniforms with all speed to the countries holding German military personnel.

Canada. — The largest PW camp in Canada was Camp 133. The following are extracts from correspondence :

Letter from the ICRC delegation, Montreal (August 4, 1942).

Up to June, most of the men in this camp had received no standard parcels. Parcel deliveries are very irregular, the delay in transit being from six to nine months. The contents are well chosen and of good quality. In many cases, especially during the last few months, all the tooth-paste was missing. Tooth-powder should be sent in future ; tubes are no longer allowed.

Letter from German Camp Leader, Camp 133 (August 10, 1942).

About 4,500 men of the Army, 500 of the Navy, and 500 of the Luftwaffe, captured in North Africa, only have tropical clothing. In view of the climate in Canada, warm clothing is urgently required.

Letter from ICRC Delegate, Montreal to Camp Leader, Camp 133 (September 9, 1942).

A parcel of catskins is being forwarded, for cases of rheumatism. I am unable to send elastic belts or any rubber articles (hernia belts

or surgical articles), as these are prohibited. Bolts of flannel are being sent, however, with which the camp leader can make body belts. Rubber or metal hot-water bottles are not obtainable. It takes some time to provide supplies for such a large number of men (11,000). I shall do my utmost to obtain tobacco and cigarettes. So far only three men have received parcels from home.

Letter from the ICRC to the German Red Cross (December 14, 1942).

A third of the parcels arrived in bad condition, some without acknowledgement slips; others had been sent first to Egypt, then to South Africa and finally to Canada. Hundreds of parcels will have to be repacked in Canada; as the contents have become mixed in the mail-bags.

A further consignment of 605 uniforms is on the way, mostly to Camp 133.

Letter from Camp Leader, Camp 133 (March, 10, 1943).

The Christmas gifts from the German Government and Red Cross have now all arrived; 9,900 German Red Cross parcels were distributed on January 30 to the men in the camp. All the groups working outside the camp shared in the distribution. In the name of all the men I am sending our heartfelt thanks to the German Red Cross; once again we have received a proof of our country's solicitude in our behalf.

The camp strength was, on February 12, 1945, 9 officers and 13,313 men.

Relief activities in behalf of Russian prisoners in Finland and of PW in Japanese hands are described in the chapters entitled "Conflicts in Eastern Europe" and "The Far Eastern Conflict". (Vol. I, pp. 404-514).

§ 7. ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

During the early years of the war, the administrative expenses of relief work were advanced by the ICRC; recovery of the outlay was confined to a commission of 2% on purchases made for the donors.

By the beginning of 1942, the work became so extensive and overhead costs increased in such proportion that the ICRC was manifestly unable to meet its commitments through its regular resources. It thus became necessary to draw up a plan to cover these expenses, and an agreement to this effect was concluded between the ICRC and the national Red Cross Societies.

Fixing of a Levy.

It was decided that the cost of handling the supplies (for the most part from overseas) should be borne by the National Societies, and that the ICRC should collect a levy proportionate to the tonnage handled. This levy was made either on the arrival in Switzerland of transit consignments, or at Marseilles, Toulon, Barcelona or Gothenburg, if the goods were shipped direct to those ports without passing through Switzerland.

A simple and equitable method of calculation was adopted : total overhead expenses were divided by the total weight of supplies handled, thus giving the rate per kilogram. Under the agreement, statements were to be made out annually, but for practical reasons shorter periods were preferred. The National Societies were then debited according to the rate fixed and in proportion to the supplies earmarked for PW and internees of each particular country. The same rule applied to welfare associations and private donors.

Since the British and American Red Cross Societies made it a practice to send to the ICRC large quantities of relief supplies for non-British and non-American prisoners and internees, these Societies agreed to simplify the work of accounting by paying the amounts due on the whole of their shipments, irrespective of the nationality of the recipients ; it was further agreed that the debt thus incurred in respect of these detainees would be repaid later by the Red Cross Societies concerned.

The rate of the levy, namely four centimes, charged as from January 1, 1942, was reduced to 1½ centimes during that year, through saving made in the costs and increase in the quantity handled. In 1943, the rate was two centimes.

In 1944, it was, in view of increasing costs, raised to five centimes, which exceeded the actual costs by about 2 centimes per kilogram. The levy made at this rate enabled the ICRC Treasury to build up a reserve fund. Deliveries fell in 1945, whilst costs rose, mainly owing to road shipments being substituted for railway transport and a rate of 6.35 centimes had to be charged between January 1, 1945, and June 30, 1946.

The average rate between 1942 and 1946 was 4½ centimes per kilo and was levied on a total of 380,783,385 kilograms. The yield from these charges enabled administrative costs of over 17 million Swiss francs to be met.

Difficulties in the transfer of funds owed to the ICRC created an unsatisfactory situation. On June 30, 1947, a number of National Societies still owed large sums to the ICRC for their share of the levy.

The following figures illustrate these operations :

(A). — *Supplies conveyed and administrative Costs*

Supplies conveyed (in kilograms) ¹

1942	46,152,492
1943	104,037,810
1944	132,765,282
1945	97,827,801
	<hr/>
	380,783,385

Administrative costs (in Swiss francs)

1942	520,670.50
1943	2,006,103.48
1944	3,690,974.30
1945	8,665,548.21
1946	2,309,027.13
	<hr/>
	17,192,323.62

¹ 1 kilogram = 2.205 lb.

(B). — *Details of Costs (in Swiss francs)*

		Percentage of gross total
Salaries of office staff	4,754,596.64	27.07
Wages of manual workers . .	2,680,302.32	15.60
Road transport costs	2,505,073.02	14.57
Overheads in the 24 Swiss warehouses	1,945,009.76	11.32
Erection of temporary ware- houses, purchase of furni- ture, machines, stores and cost of installation	1,691,358.15	9.84
Rent of sundry warehouses and amortisation	1,124,494.95	6.38
Local road transport	688,154.92	4.01
Pharmaceutical Division . . .	690,864.57	4.02
Sundries (delegations, con- voying agents, etc.)	563,838.61	3.28
Sundry administrative office expenses in Switzerland and abroad (office costs, supplies, cost of missions, telephone, telegraph, lighting, heating, social insurance, etc.) . . .	1,666,444.52	9.74
Reserve fund for liquidation expenses ¹	699,647.85	4.07
Gross Total	19,009,785.31	110.10
Less : Sundry receipts ² . . .	1,817,461.69	10.10
Net Expenses	17,192,323.62	100.00

¹ This Reserve Fund is intended to cover all expenses foreseen and undertaken before June 30, 1946, those incurred in the process of winding up relief activities after that date, and unforeseen expenses (disputes, litigation, delayed claims).

A statement on the use made of these funds will be supplied by the ICRC to all National Red Cross Societies as soon as the former relief activities have been wound up,

² These are the produce of the sale of temporary buildings or miscellaneous equipment, etc.

To the above expenses must be added the cost of reconditioning damaged parcels in Switzerland and repacking goods on instructions from donors. The cost of the labour and supplies required for this work could not be charged to the levy. They were therefore debited to the National Societies and other welfare agencies directly concerned.

Lastly, unloading costs at Genoa, Lisbon, Marseilles and Toulon were charged direct to the Red Cross Societies, according to the nationality of the recipients.

§ 8. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

On the outbreak of war, the ICRC employed only two staff members to deal with relief supplies: these had hitherto been engaged in purchasing goods for the victims of the Spanish Civil War¹.

This "Purchasing Section" became the "Relief Section" after a few weeks. Its work was to procure donations for PW and civilian internees, and to forward relief—which was usually done via one or more neutral countries. As international communications were still fairly satisfactory during the early months of the war, the ICRC entrusted the handling and carriage of goods to expert business firms, in particular to shipping agents. Various purchases were also made in Switzerland by the Relief Section at the request of the donors.

After the campaigns in Western Europe, applications for relief reached Geneva in steadily increasing numbers. Restrictions of all kinds, particularly in the occupied countries, required action by the ICRC on many occasions; finally, the Committee itself undertook a number of duties it had hitherto deputed to shipping agents.

The extension of these activities is illustrated by the corresponding increase in the staff of the Relief Section: whilst there were six members in 1939, they numbered fifty-two at the end of 1940. At that date, the work was allotted as follows.

¹ See Report of the ICRC on their work in connection with the Spanish Civil War.

The Section comprised three services : the *Collective Relief Service*, the *Individual Relief Service* and the *Pharmaceutical Service*. Two branches were added to the Collective Relief Service, the first known as the Commercial Service, which dealt with all questions pertaining to purchases, warehousing and other technical problems concerning the supplies themselves, and a service known as the Shipping Section, which specialized in distribution and despatch. These two departments took over the tasks previously performed by the shipping agents.

Whereas collective relief consignments grew continuously, the level of individual relief consignments, which were so important during the early months, soon became stationary ; in fact, with the increasing insecurity of communications in Europe, the level presently declined. Consequently, the staff of the Individual Relief Section showed no tendency to increase ; it comprised a secretariat, with a Swiss correspondence office, a foreign correspondence office, an administrative bureau and a shipping office, which maintained close contact with the Post Office.

The Pharmaceutical Service worked in close cooperation with the Joint Relief Commission, which had a qualified staff for the purchase and packing of medicaments. A separate organization for pharmaceutical supplies was justified by the need for expert staff (pharmacists and chemists).

Goods were shipped through the Relief Division. On October 1, 1942, the " Pharmaceutical Medical Control " office was reorganized as the Pharmaceutical Liaison Section. This Section also dealt with relief for British and American PW. At this time therefore two parallel bodies were in existence, the Pharmaceutical Liaison Section of the ICRC and the Pharmaceutical Section attached to the Joint Relief Commission.

At the close of 1940, three separate departments under a single management handled questions concerning relief to PW, civilian internees and populations¹. At the beginning

¹ This last activity was taken over by the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross upon its official inception in July 1941. (See pp. 359 et seq. and the said Commission's Report).

of 1942 the extension of relief activities to new theatres of war (Balkans, North Africa, Eastern front) raised a great many questions of principle, and the ICRC set up a managing body able to take full responsibility and to act as a board of directors. This body was the Relief Commission¹.

At the same time, the Relief Section for collective shipments to PW and civilian internees of equivalent standing was made a Division, the director of which was responsible to the Relief Commission for collective relief programmes.

At the beginning of 1942 therefore, the Relief Commission had under its authority the Collective Relief Division and the Individual Relief Section. On the other hand, the Service under the Relief Division which, until June 1942, had handled technical problems of transport and communications, was transformed into an independent Division for Transport and Communications, and placed under a Transport Commission. The latter was the counterpart of the Relief Commission and worked closely with it.

The Relief Commission met according to requirements. The large number of problems in the general field of relief required a close liaison between all the Committee's departments dealing with relief² and a branch of the General Secretariat of the ICRC, attached to the Chairman of the Relief Commission, ensured that liaison.

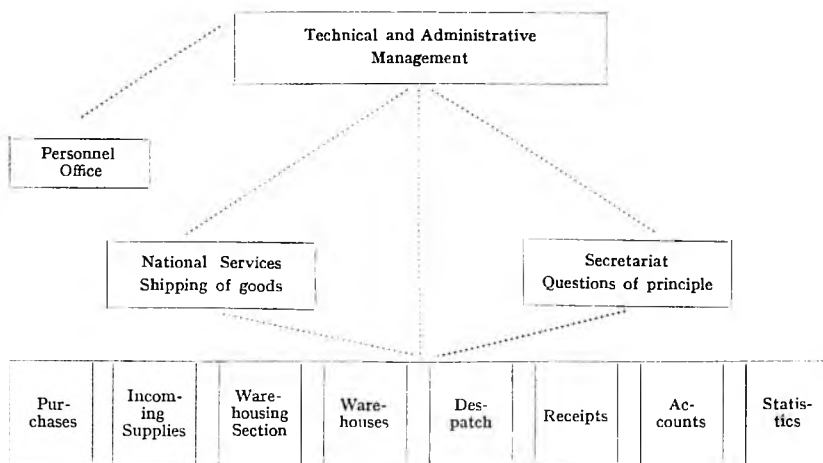
The main relief work of the ICRC consisted in the transmission of foodstuffs, tobacco, clothing and medicaments in standard parcels or in bulk. It was decided to assign this work to the Relief Division, whereas individual relief work would remain the concern of an independent section under the Relief Commission. Likewise, intellectual aid and educational supplies were handled by an independent Section. Matters of principle

¹ This Relief Commission had been active since the autumn of 1940 as an unofficial advisory body and was presided over by a member of the ICRC. Its function was then mainly to coordinate relief work for PW and civilian populations.

² Relief Division, Individual Relief Section, Pharmaceutical Section, Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, Special Aid Division and, on the technical side, the Transport and Communications Division.

regarding pharmaceutical supplies remained the concern of the Pharmaceutical Section of the Joint Relief Commission ¹. At the beginning of 1944, pharmaceutical relief work grew on such a scale that it became necessary to create a Pharmaceutical Division ².

Thus, after various phases of adaptation, the final structure of the Relief Division was as follows :



Relief Division.

The Relief Division, which was mainly concerned with the receipt, handling, warehousing, forwarding, inspection and administration of supplies, was, although non-profit-making, necessarily organized as an ordinary business undertaking. In the course of the war it was to become the largest private shipping concern in Europe. To perform its task efficiently, it had to engage expert business personnel. The latter were largely independent ; the Relief Division was responsible only for the technical aspect of relief work for PW and civilian

¹ Standardized shipments of medicaments (medical kits, etc.) were however dealt with by the Relief Division, which forwarded these parcels to PW camps according to instructions received from the donors.

² See p. 278.

internees ; all questions of principle had to be submitted to the Relief Commission.

The Division was under the charge of a *Director* and an *Assistant Director*¹. They managed, coordinated, supervised and organized the work of all the sections of the Division, in all technical and administrative details.

The *Personnel Office* dealt with all matters relating to the staff, both clerical and manual, i.e. engagements, dismissals, salaries and social insurance. When relief work was at its peak, the staff comprised about 300 clerks and 400 workmen.

The *Secretariat* had to deal with all questions of principle relating to relief work ; this involved correspondence and negotiations with the civil and military authorities in Switzerland and abroad, the National Red Cross Societies and their representatives in Switzerland, and so forth.

There were six *National Sections* : American, British, French, German, Italian and Allied, the last comprising the following nationalities : Belgian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Yugoslav, Norwegian, Polish, Russian and others.

The common task of the Sections was to forward supplies, to keep an account of stocks and to make out the shipping orders. They handled in a similar fashion the supplies delivered to the Relief Division by the Purchasing Section².

The *Incoming Supplies Service* notified the National Sections and the Warehousing Service of anticipated arrivals of supplies, announced by airborne advance copies of the bills of lading, and other documents. The National Sections could thus arrange for distribution to the PW, whilst the Warehousing Service prepared the necessary storage space. The Incoming Supplies Service made out a report of the missing goods.

The *Warehousing Service* supervised the erection and equipment of the warehouses under the management of the Relief Division, dealt with the management of the bonded warehouses, allotted incoming goods to the warehouses, and negotiated with the Swiss Customs.

¹ The latter resigned as on March 1, 1946.

² See pp. 225-227.

The *Shipping Office* drew up the accompanying documents for the consignments sent by the Relief Division (such as the Swiss and international way-bills), marked the railway wagons, and made out despatch notices for the spokesmen and the receipt forms which they were to sign. In addition, it maintained relations with the Swiss and foreign railways through its station representatives at Geneva, Basle, Schaffhausen, St. Margarethen, Buchs and Chiasso.

The *Receipts Office* sorted the receipts which came back from the camps, checked them and sent a copy to the donors. It had also to search for missing receipts and make out duplicates.

The *Accounts Service* calculated the costs of the Relief Division chargeable to the levy ¹. In view of the scale of these costs and their highly distinct character, the Service was not subordinate to the General Treasury of the ICRC; the latter acted merely as the Relief Division's banker.

The *Statistical Service* kept statistics by means of Watson Business Machine cards, on incoming and outgoing supplies ², on all aspects of the Relief Division's work and on the movement of supplies which passed through its hands ³.

The organization described above was maintained until June 30, 1946. On that date the work of the various Services of the Collective Relief Division had to be separated. One of the Services dealt with the liquidation of the Division's war activities ⁴, and another handled subsequent relief work according to an independent financing method ⁵.

Pharmaceutical Division.

Early in 1944, the medical and pharmaceutical requirements of PW of all nationalities increased to such a degree that the Pharmaceutical Section had to be reorganized. On the basis of a scheme drawn up by the Manager of the Joint

¹ See p. 270.

² See Vol. II, p. 112.

³ See examples in the Annexes.

⁴ See Report on the Liquidation of the Levy, submitted by the ICRC to the donors.

⁵ See Chapter 10, p. 99 and Chapter 11, p. 118.

Relief Commission, the ICRC decided on March 14, 1944, to set up a Pharmaceutical Division which would be independent of the Relief Division. This new department was subsequently attached to the Medical Division, itself founded in January, 1946.

In 1942 there had been plans for a body which would frame purchasing programmes in Switzerland and solicit donations. The efforts of this body caused a large influx of supplies to the Pharmaceutical Section, composed mainly of relief in kind, in the shape of drugs which could be stocked. Consequently, the Section required a large measure of independence and freedom to take emergency action.

The nucleus of the Pharmaceutical Division was a staff of eleven members, which increased rapidly on account of the swift expansion of the work.

In August 1944, there were 24 staff members and seven packers; in January 1945, 39 staff members and ten packers; in April 1945, the staff reached its maximum with 58 employees, sixteen of whom were packers.

Through its specialized sections, the ICRC purchased medicaments and general hospital stores amounting to about 2,700,000 Swiss francs. It made up, despatched or re-forwarded, in all, medical stores weighing some 1,900,000 kilograms.

Intellectual Aid Service.

The nature of these relief supplies, the fact that they could not be standardized, and the relations required with welfare agencies not affiliated to any National Red Cross Society, gave this Service an entirely distinct character.

Its constituent departments were briefly as follows:

(1) — A *Secretariat*, the managing body of the Service, which handled questions of principle, kept in touch with the other ICRC departments, in particular the Delegations, corresponded with the National Red Cross Societies and authorities, and supervised and allocated the work to be done. It also represented the ICRC on the Advisory Committee for the supply of reading matter to PW and internees;

(2) — The *National Sections*, which received and answered requests from PW. They corresponded with the latter, as far as possible, in their own language.

These Sections were in close contact with the *Library*, the *Card-Indexes*, the *Purchasing Section* and the *Dispatch Section*. In these departments, too, work was organised according to the recipients' nationality.

The Intellectual Aid Service also comprised the following technical departments: *Storekeepers* and *Packers*, and *Postal and Railway Shipping*; the latter was in practice a subdivision of the general Shipping Service, which handled all relief transports.

Early in 1946, the National Sections for Allied nationals were entirely dissolved. The organization of the Service remained similar to its wartime structure, but the staff was soon reduced to five members only.

Chapter 2

Individual Relief

Throughout the war, a separate department, the Individual Relief Service, was responsible for the despatch, transmission and receipt of the parcels addressed to individual PW. Matters which concerned both collective and individual relief consignments, such as the blockade, the purchase of supplies, land and sea transport, and distribution by camp leaders were of course dealt with simultaneously.

The present chapter describes only the problems connected with individual relief.

(1). — *Labels*

In order to restrict the despatch of individual parcels, especially those sent to Polish PW from occupied Poland, the German authorities introduced a system of labels. These were issued by the camp commandants to the PW, with instructions to send them to their relatives and friends for use when despatching parcels. Only parcels bearing these official labels were accepted.

After the Franco-German armistice, the French Government agreed to a similar system for next of kin parcels addressed to French PW in Germany. The number of such parcels was a rule limited to two a man each month; three were exceptionally allowed. The German authorities who, at the request of the ICRC, had ceased applying the label system to parcels

sent to Polish PW from countries other than Poland, then made the system compulsory for parcels from all countries, and later applied it in respect of all Allied prisoners except the British and American.

The next of kin of a great many PW, who lived overseas, received their official labels only after great delay. This was true for French next of kin in North Africa, Belgians in the Congo, Poles, Jugoslavs and Greeks in various continents, as well as the families of men whose home towns were in Australia, New Zealand, Latin America and South Africa. The label system, introduced to regulate the parcel traffic between neighbouring countries, became a serious obstacle when applied to oversea countries.

Having unsuccessfully opposed this system, the ICRC tried to limit its ill-effects in particular cases and instructed senders and recipients who were not clear as to the procedure. At the suggestion of the British Red Cross, the Committee requested the German authorities to allow relatives in Great Britain to send parcels to PW without special labels. This request was not met, but the German authorities agreed that parcels should be distributed, without labels, to French and Belgian PW whose families resided overseas.

In September 1942, it was rumoured that special labels were no longer required for parcels to Dutch prisoners. A decision to this effect had been made by the German military authorities in Holland, who wished to place the despatch of parcels to Dutch PW in the hands of the Netherland Red Cross, which was under their control. This decision was however repudiated by the German military authorities in Berlin in July 1943; some confusion resulted, since in certain camps the commandants had ceased issuing the labels, whilst prisoners could not receive parcels without them, and certain families had been misinformed.

A similar misapprehension occurred with regard to Polish PW, who continued to send their labels regularly to the Polish Red Cross Committee in Warsaw, although this body had been suspended by the German military authorities early in 1942.

On September 27, 1943, individual parcels to Allied PW were placed under further restrictions by the German authorities prohibiting postal communication between Polish PW and their relatives in Great Britain. This measure covered the despatch of labels and was later extended to Yugoslav prisoners. It did not however apply to Polish PW who had fought with the French forces (*Westpolen*); these, like the French PW, were still allowed to send correspondence and labels to Great Britain. The ICRC was no longer able, in these circumstances, to send on the labels received from certain categories of prisoners. They were used on the parcels which the ICRC was able to supply, although these were few in proportion to the number of requests received.

About the same time, the ICRC was informed of an illicit trade in labels in the camps. In order to distribute the few parcels then available as fairly as possible, the Committee sent a circular to camp leaders asking them to collect labels and send them to Geneva, after signing them. They also requested that the number of labels sent should not exceed 10% of the camp strength, and that priority should be given to the sick or disabled. Finally, the ICRC obtained authority to send the labels for Yugoslav PW to the British Red Cross in London, which to some extent counteracted the effects of the stoppage in direct postal communications.

Difficulties of a similar nature arose after the liberation of France, when a great many German servicemen were held in that country. The French authorities, doubtless fearing a great influx of family parcels, decided to adopt the same system of labels for individual parcels to PW in their hands. The Committee, which had never condoned the German military authorities' decision to restrict the number of parcels sent to PW, requested the French authorities to withdraw the system, and the latter agreed. When the parcel post was resumed between Germany and France, at least from the Western occupation zones, the German authorities limited exports by placing parcel consignments under the supervision of local welfare organizations in Germany; this procedure satisfied all concerned.

(2). — *Despatch*

Individual parcels were sent by post and were of three types.

(a) — *Parcels sent from neutral to belligerent countries.*

These were sent as soon as regulations on maximum weight, prohibited articles and packing were available¹. They involved a great deal of work, as an export permit was required in each case.

By the end of 1940, exports had already been considerably reduced. Early in 1941, the ICRC for the last time obtained an extension of the export licence for individual parcels sent by relatives or friends in Switzerland; shortly afterwards, the export of foodstuffs and most articles of clothing was prohibited. Before this regulation came into force, the Committee was able to make purchases abroad and to place a reserve stock of individual parcels in its warehouses. In July, Geneva received 5,000 clothing and 5,000 food parcels from the American Red Cross. These stocks were drawn upon by donors in Switzerland who were relatives or friends of Allied prisoners, and were rapidly exhausted. Further orders for 9,000 parcels in all were placed with the American Red Cross in 1941 and 1942. In November 1942, the American Red Cross stipulated that the parcels should be sent only to Allied prisoners, excluding those from Axis States. In agreement with Allied donors, the ICRC abandoned this work at the end of 1942, when the volume of collective supplies was sufficient to ensure regular issues to nearly all Allied prisoners.

As Geneva continued to receive requests from relatives and friends in Switzerland of PW belonging to both belligerent parties, it sought, in addition to its collective relief activities, to set up reserve stocks of parcels for that purpose. Here the ICRC did work similar to that of several private organizations in Switzerland, such as the French PW Relief Committee at Berne, the French Welfare Centre at Geneva, and the Relief Committee for PW and Civilian Internees at Lausanne.

¹ See pp. 9 et seq.

In the summer of 1943, the ICRC ordered 2,000 standard food parcels from Hungary ; on their arrival, 1,500 were handed to the department that had meanwhile begun to send relief to the concentration camps¹. The remaining five hundred were at once despatched. In May 1944, 3,000 more parcels were obtained, but a subsequent order for 3,000 was never delivered, owing to military events.

Individual parcels could be exported from Egypt, and the ICRC arranged through its Cairo delegation for residents in Switzerland to order parcels for Italian, German and Japanese PW and civilian internees in Africa, Palestine and British India. Monthly lists were sent to Cairo, when the money orders had been received and checked in Geneva. The parcels despatched in 1944 and 1945 were mostly intended for Italian and German PW in North Africa ; they ceased in June 1945, when the Egyptian authorities placed a ban on such exports. Certain articles, such as watches, could only be sent individually. The ICRC got in touch with Swiss watchmakers and tried to meet requests from doctors, orderlies, chaplains, camp leaders and camp teachers. From 1942 to 1945, 250 watches were thus forwarded ; quantities of spare parts and watchmaking tools were also supplied. In addition, Braille watches were sent to the blind. The first step in this regard was taken by the British Red Cross, which ordered 126 Braille watches from Swiss makers, directing that 106 should be despatched, and that twenty should be held at Geneva for issue, when required, to Allied PW in Germany. In 1942, the ICRC also supplied 24 Braille watches to the Australian Red Cross. In October 1942, a Geneva firm presented the Committee with 72 Braille watches, for equal distribution among German, American and British PW ; 48 could not be delivered, as the Germans and Americans for whom they were intended had been repatriated. The ICRC suggested that the 24 watches destined for American PW should be handed to repatriated French PW. These watches were then distributed by the French Red Cross in Paris ; the remaining 23 watches were handed to the German Red Cross in Berlin.

¹ See pp. 73 et seq.

(b) — *Parcels despatched between belligerent countries in transit through Switzerland.*

At the beginning of the war, the ICRC set up a transit postal service¹. During the hostilities, this service handled 70,887 individual postal parcels, of which about 75% were repacked and usually reconditioned. Many of them bore inadequate, incorrect or out-dated labels; many had no labels at all. All this involved much labour.

(3). — *Sorting of individual parcels sent by post through Switzerland*

On the Italian armistice, a great many individual parcels for Allied PW in Italy were on the way. All Allied PW still in the hands of the German forces in Italy or of the Neo-Facist Republic were transferred to Germany. The Swiss postal authorities undertook to sort and assemble parcels held up in Switzerland, and to correct the addresses as soon as Geneva was notified of the transfers made. This concerned especially the parcels despatched by the General Post Office in London. The sorting and change of addresses were done at the Basle Post Office, with the assistance of a number of experts sent by the Committee. In the period until the end of 1943, only 12,414 new addresses were discovered; in February 1944, 19,636 parcels were sent, and by the end of April 73,000 had been despatched. In July, 50,000 parcels remained; as they could not be stored indefinitely, the ICRC suggested to the British Red Cross that they should be forwarded as collective consignments. The General Post Office regulations however still required that all undelivered parcels should be returned to the senders, and the British Red Cross asked the ICRC to send them back, with the exception of the small tobacco parcels. By the end of 1944, despatch figures were as follows:

¹ See p. 11.

Parcels sent to PW and civilians in Germany, both as collective and individual consignments.	143,767
Parcels issued to British military internees in Swit- zerland	9,337
Parcels returned to senders	396
Total . . .	153,500

Throughout the war, the ICRC had to forward individual parcels coming from overseas. This form of consignment was given up by the larger donor organizations, but was continued, in particular, by foreign private organizations in Egypt, and by various committees in the East and in Africa. These donors required the assistance of the ICRC, especially in obtaining labels. Individual parcels were sent to Geneva by the Polish and Yugoslav Relief Committees in Cairo, the French Relief Fund and the French Club in Cairo, the French Red Cross in Port Said, Beyrout, Tunisia and Algeria, the Moroccan War Fellowship, the Colonial Women's Unions at Jadotville, Elisabethville and Albertville, the Kilo-Moto Gold Mine Company, and various other organizations. To forward the parcels, the ICRC had to ascertain addresses, check with the help of the Agency's card-index (on account of frequent transfers) and, above all, to act with speed. The despatch of parcels when ready was often delayed for various reasons ; thus, individual parcels assembled in the Congo between December 1943 and March 1944, were held up at Lobito until January 1945, only reaching Switzerland the following month, when the forwarding of individual parcels to Germany had ceased. They were, with the donors' consent, sent to the Belgian Government, then reinstalled in Brussels, which handed the parcels to the National Ex-Servicemen's Relief Bureau.

Chapter 3

Intellectual Aid ¹

The relief afforded by the ICRC to prisoners and internees extended also to the spiritual, educational and moral spheres. The Committee thus maintained close relations with the welfare associations concerned in this kind of work. This relief included devotional articles for all faiths (Bibles, New Testaments, prayer-books, Korans), furthermore books and periodicals of all kinds, text-books for art students, musical instruments and scores, games and sports gear, and so forth. The Committee also induced the responsible authorities to grant official recognition to the studies pursued in camps, and sought to relieve the tedium of camp life by organizing libraries and study groups. In this connection, the Committee was always careful to fall in with the initiatives taken by the Detaining Powers themselves ².

The necessary reading matter was contributed by various bodies, in particular by the National Red Cross Societies, which in turn collected books and funds for purchases in their respective countries. The donors included public and private libraries, and many private individuals made substantial contributions in money. By 1940, six important welfare organizations with headquarters in Switzerland set up in Geneva, under the chairmanship of the ICRC, an Advisory Committee for the supply of reading material to prisoners of war and internees. These organizations were :

¹ Called " Intellectual Relief " during the war.

² See Vol. I, pp. 273-280.

- (1)—The World Alliance of YMCA ;
- (2)—The International Education Bureau ;
- (3)—The European Students' Relief Fund ;
- (4)—The International Federation of Librarians' Associations ;
- (5)—The World Commission for Spiritual Aid to Prisoners of War ;
- (6)—The Swiss Catholic Mission for Prisoners of War.

In 1943, the Advisory Committee carried through a large-scale collection in Switzerland, the yield being divided between the above organizations and the International Committee's Intellectual Aid Section. A vast library adequate for the varied needs of camps and individual PW was built up at Geneva. It contained scientific and medical books, text-books for students, light reading matter and books for the blind. Geneva also sent individual book parcels made up by National Red Cross Societies and private persons living in Switzerland or abroad.

Consignments of books were selected from the stocks of the library, examined for matter unacceptable to the censorship in the detaining countries, and then dispatched post-free all over the world, either in cases or by parcels not exceeding 5 kilos. Contributions from National Red Cross Societies enabled the ICRC to buy stationery in Switzerland, which allowed the export of such articles. Artists' materials and musical instruments were supplied by the YMCA. Each consignment, whether collective or individual, included a detailed list and a receipt in duplicate, one copy of which was to be signed and returned to Geneva, where each recipient was registered on an index-card. Many tens of thousands of books, games and music scores were sent in this way, and the stationery shipments included well over a million items.

Equitable allocation of these stores was ensured by the camp leaders. Co-operation by correspondence was of course facilitated by the visits of the Committee's delegates. The PW were also allowed to apply personally to the ICRC. By the wide variety of their requests the PW gave proof of a great

need of occupation, which only reading and intellectual pursuits of every kind could satisfy. The men who experienced captivity are even better qualified than those who tried to make it bearable, to affirm that intellectual aid is an indispensable adjunct to all other forms of relief.

The ICRC and the other relief organizations aimed especially at creating libraries in every camp, and these very quickly became a valuable stimulus and a source of recreation. Those men who were unable to make personal application to the librarians received the books which were sent in travelling sets to labour detachments in the most out of the way places.

Chaplains of all faiths were able to minister freely to these communities. The ICRC passed on requests for "spiritual aid" to the religious organizations who were members of the Advisory Committee. The PW of Eastern religions were by no means forgotten; they received prayer books in such languages as Urdu, Hindustani, Bengali and Mahratti.

Arts and crafts flourished in the camps, and the ICRC supplied quantities of material to sculptors, draughtsmen, artists and decorators. In one civilian internment camp—to quote but a single example—a Fine Arts school was attended by 89 pupils, including 48 children. In a PW camp, a well-known artist arranged a course of sketching and cartoon-drawing for his fellow-prisoners.

Reference should also be made to the camp newspapers which were a link between PW of the same nationality, and sometimes also with those of other nationalities. The camp leader or his assistants contributed information of general interest for publication. For this reason the Committee included in its consignments of material for intellectual aid everything which directly or indirectly furthered the publication of such newspapers.

Dramatics and music were the favourite entertainment of prisoners and internees, and the Committee sent hundreds of scripts of comedies, one-act plays, sketches, monologues, music scores and so on¹. Material for scenery, masks and

¹ Musical instruments were sent mainly by the YMCA.

costumes were occasionally sent. Excellent theatrical companies were thus formed, assisted by decorators, stage-managers, carpenters, wardrobe-keepers and many other professional or extempore artisans.

Sports and indoor games were an especially valuable form of recreation, as they helped to keep the men in good health, despite conditions of captivity. The Committee sent indoor games as a rule, whilst the YMCA devoted itself more particularly to sports gear.

The blind were not forgotten ; many games, such as dominoes, chess, draughts and cards, which develop the sense of touch that is their paramount resource, were sent to them.

One can easily imagine the field thus opened to the relief organizations. The obligations of the Detaining Powers, clearly defined in the 1929 Convention, were as a rule observed. But as the war progressed and extended, these obligations grew increasingly onerous. The role of the International Committee became more definite, and as far as intellectual aid was concerned, it was clearly required to collect material, facilitate international shipments, extend Red Cross protection to the auxiliary welfare organizations duly recognized by the belligerents, and to safeguard PW property used in intellectual pursuits. In a word, the ICRC had to protect, directly and by all means approved by the belligerents, the intellectual and moral health of PW and civilian internees.

In the interests of neutrality in all intellectual, cultural and religious matters, the ICRC endeavoured to provide the reading material, cultural resources and devotional articles required by all the nationalities, languages and faiths of the captives. The common desire of the ICRC and the auxiliary welfare organizations was to ensure to each man the intellectual aid corresponding to his needs, aptitudes and convictions. A remarkable co-operative effort was thus made in the religious sphere, each organization concerned knowing the comfort and moral strength that can be found in the normal practice of religion.

Aid to German Prisoners.

The German Red Cross sent books, prints, reproductions of works of art, musical instruments, gramophone records and plays to the camps in Africa, Australia, Canada, Egypt, India, the Argentine and Great Britain. The German authorities paid great attention to the education of their nationals in captivity, especially of the women and children in the civilian internment camps. The prisoners benefited very greatly by this assistance, perfecting themselves in their trades and improving their knowledge.

By the spring of 1941, questionnaires were sent to German PW camps. The leaders supplied precise details of the various professions and trades represented in the camps. These questionnaires were also issued to women internees. An examination of these documents made it possible to classify the captives according to their trade, profession and aptitudes, and to organize a proper distribution of the material for intellectual aid coming from Germany.

Prisoners and internees were sent courses of instruction in series known as *Soldatenbriefe* (Soldiers' correspondence courses). By this means, curricula were standardized, and the German Government was able to recognize these studies and the final examinations, provided, however, that the Examining Boards who sat in the camps were approved by the German Ministry of Education. Only the final university examinations could not be taken in the camps.

After the German surrender, the ICRC was confronted by all the problems of pursuing the work of assisting PW who had no Government or National Red Cross to represent their interests.

After 1940, the ICRC directed its efforts mainly to collecting relief material. It began to count more and more on the auxiliary organizations which, since the armistice, had rapidly regained their freedom of action. These organizations, particularly the YMCA, contributed in a very large measure towards the creation of study centres in the new camps.

The ICRC decided to allocate a part of the relief funds to intellectual aid. To make the donations of books as effectual

as possible it adopted the system of "General Interest". A PW teacher was sent text-books for use by the whole group of students; subscriptions for scientific, literary, artistic, technical and other reviews were paid, thus enabling all the groups to keep abreast of current events in their own subjects; documentation was collected for PW doctors.

About 1,500 standard works, weighing in all 1,330 kilos, were thus distributed by the delegations in France, North Africa, Poland, Italy, Belgium, Germany and Egypt; 435 subscriptions were paid for Swiss medical journals, which contained valuable information on medicine, pharmacy and dentistry. Subscriptions were as a rule taken out in the name of the camps or hospitals and the copies circulated. In 1947, 8,350 of these periodicals were sent out to the different countries. It was even possible to supplement the Swiss medical journals with some reviews published in Germany, which were given to the Committee's delegations at Munich and Vlotho, and in turn forwarded to Geneva. The doctors, who in many cases had been deprived of all scientific information for several years, thus learned of medical and therapeutical developments. In this way, they not only refreshed and increased their knowledge, but, above all, were able to prepare themselves for an immediate resumption of their professional duties on their return to civil life.

Relief for Italian Prisoners.

In 1941, the Italian Red Cross established a stock of books in Geneva to enable the ICRC to meet the requests it received direct. As Italian PW were often interned in countries far distant from home, the ICRC suggested that its delegations be commissioned to purchase books on the spot. The Italian Red Cross, however, did not agree to this suggestion and was thereafter confronted by the blockade. Only the camps in the Middle East and South Africa seem to have had sufficient material for the purpose of study and recreation.

The Italian PW in England were provided with text-books through the YMCA. About 1,500 volumes thus passed through the ICRC delegation in London.

The Holy See and the National Catholic Welfare Conference in the United States sent the ICRC a very large number of prayer-books and religious works. Books in Italian were also collected in Switzerland and were made over to the Italian military internees in that country.

The Committee's intellectual aid to Italian prisoners and internees was on the whole limited, on account of the work done by the Italian Red Cross itself.

Aid to French Prisoners.

During the German occupation, it was decided that occupied France should organize intellectual aid for the camps in France itself, whilst the French PW camps in Germany would be helped by non-occupied France.

In the free zone, the *Centre de ramassage du livre* worked in conjunction with the official censor's office and sent its collections of books to Geneva in accordance with instructions from the French Red Cross. The Advisory Committee notified that Society of the prisoners' requirements. Consignments were also sent direct from France to Germany.

In 1941, 90% of the Advisory Committee's activities were devoted to the French prisoners. The YMCA played the most prominent part in this Committee, whilst the ICRC dealt mainly with the administrative formalities involved. The camp leaders and the French PW were in direct communication with the ICRC and kept it informed of the intellectual activities in their respective camps. This was done not merely for information purposes, but to provide supporting material for possible representations to the Detaining Power. The ICRC drew generously on its stock of French books for the French PW. These consignments increased especially in the last two years of the war. They were the more keenly appreciated as relief from France dwindled.

Aid to British PW.

The British Red Cross kept in close touch with the PW camps, and the task of the ICRC was much rather to ensure

the transmission of material sent via Geneva, than to provide intellectual aid itself.

The Indian Red Cross and the Egyptian Red Crescent contributed the religious literature required by the Hindu and Moslem prisoners.

Aid to American PW.

The Committee provided little intellectual aid to American prisoners, since, under a special arrangement, the World Alliance of the YMCA itself arranged and directed this work.

Nevertheless in organizing the prisoners' studies, religious devotions and recreations, the Committee's delegates gave the same attention to American PW as to the others.

Aid to PW of other nationalities.

The Polish, Yugoslav, Dutch, Greek and Russian PW received supplies of standard literature and text-books from the stocks built up by collections in Switzerland or donations from National Red Cross Societies. Particular help was given by the Polish Red Cross. The ICRC had some difficulty in collecting books in Russian, Serb, Greek, Dutch and Norwegian, but met a large number of requests through appeals to the auxiliary organizations and to foreign residents in Switzerland. The British Red Cross was also most generous towards PW who were not British, but were attached in any way to the British forces. They authorized the ICRC to distribute books from their stocks, in particular to men who were anxious to pursue their university studies.

Chapter 4

Medical Aid

§ I. MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL AID

Under Article 14 of the 1929 Convention, every camp must have an infirmary capable of supplying any form of medical attention required by the prisoners.

As far as circumstances permitted, this provision was generally observed by the belligerents. The camp infirmaries could not, however, always have adequate supplies of all medicaments or hospital equipment they needed. The ICRC then undertook to meet these shortages by suitable consignments, the allocation of which was, as usual, carried out in conformity with Red Cross principles.

(A) — Allied Prisoners of War

I. Requirements

During the first two years of the war, information reaching Geneva on the state of health of Allied PW showed that the medicaments and medical stores issued by the Detaining Power were adequate. Towards the close of 1941, however, the situation changed. The diminution of food rations, the decline in living and working conditions, and the lowering morale amongst PW all helped to sap their powers of resistance, and requests for medical stores began to multiply. Furthermore, the amount of medicaments and medical stores made available to PW diminished. Certain National Societies had,

up to the close of 1941, been able to send their PW appreciable quantities of medical stores, but now met with increasing difficulties in sending them direct ; a neutral intermediary thus became indispensable, and the ICRC was asked to assist.

Judging by the applications received from camp doctors the needs were apparently very similar in all camps for Allied prisoners. The principal shortages appeared to be in vitamin tablets, tonics, especially for cases of anaemia and heart trouble, sulphamides and, during cold weather, all forms of expectorants and resolvents. The camps also required dressings in bulk, disinfectants and insecticides and, for sick quarters, minor surgical instruments, syringes and hospital stores.

As the living conditions in German camps grew worse, applications became more urgent and numerous, and covered every branch of medicine and pharmaceuticals. Predominant among these were requests for specialities not included in standard kits, most of which came from the United States or Great Britain and were available in almost all camps. Thus, large quantities of sera and vaccines were needed for the treatment of infectious disease and sometimes for the prevention of possible epidemics, such as dysentery, typhoid, exanthematic typhus, and so on.

Although the needs were strikingly similar, some categories of PW nevertheless were particularly prone to certain diseases ; thus, tuberculosis was rife among the Jugoslavs, despite the fact that they were given the same food parcels as certain other nationalities. This was apparently due to the fact that these men were more sensitive to changes of climate. The ICRC made special efforts to supply them with the medicaments and tonics they lacked. The American PW appeared to suffer chiefly from digestive trouble (gastritis, ulcers, etc.). The requests sent to Geneva by the American doctors bore mainly on sulphamides and medicaments for the digestive system.

2. Collective Aid in Money

Considerable sums were entrusted to the ICRC for the purchase of medical stores for PW of certain nationalities. They were contributed by National Red Cross Societies (in

particular the American, British, Dutch, Yugoslav and Polish Red Cross), by Governments (Belgium, France, Greece and Yugoslavia), or by various relief organizations such as the *Aide aux prisonniers et internés belges*.

Furthermore, a certain number of Red Cross Societies (in particular the American and Canadian Societies), private institutions and individuals gave the ICRC money for medical aid to PW and political deportees, regardless of their nationality.

3. Collective Aid in Kind

(a) — *Reserve stocks*.

“ Reserve stocks ” meant the accumulation of quantities of medical and pharmaceutical products for repacking, in compliance with individual requests. These reserves gave the ICRC full freedom to despatch relatively large and urgent consignments at any time.

American PW. — The American Red Cross was the first to build up stocks in Geneva, which were originally intended for PW. These reserves derived from consignments arriving in Geneva from March to November 1944 and amounted to 31 tons of medicaments ; of these, twelve tons only were issued to American PW. The A. R. C. fairly soon decided to give PW of other nationalities the benefit of these stores, and from May to December 1944 numerous issues were made in camps for Belgian, Dutch, French, Yugoslav, Polish and other prisoners of war.

The initial stocks were replenished in 1945 by shipments comprising one ton of various medicaments and 100 special assortments, totalling 33 tons, called “ Men’s Medical Kits ”. Each of these included 15 parcels. These assortments could be despatched direct to camps, without re-packing.

British PW. — Transport of medical relief to British PW, from Great Britain to Germany, became increasingly difficult, and the ICRC recognised the fact that the transit system no

longer came up to expectations. Too much time now elapsed between the transmission of a request and the arrival of stocks in camp. The ICRC then suggested that the British Red Cross should build up stocks in Geneva for British PW only. London agreed and from October 1944 to November 1945, sent over 77 tons of medical stores to Geneva, including 14 tons of cod-liver oil¹ and three tons of insecticide. Some 15 tons of various products were issued to British PW, in camps or repatriation centres, or on the march. The rapid sequence of events in Germany alone prevented the full use of these stocks; they served however to carry through extensive relief operations.

Other Allied PW. — A certain waste of labour was inherent in working by nationalities. A plan for creating a pharmaceutical pool in Geneva for PW of all Allied States consequently soon took shape. In February 1944, the ICRC submitted practical proposals to interested National Societies, together with a schedule of the products likely to be required. The Committee stressed the need promptly to make up deficiencies in pharmaceutical products and medical stores, but added that the Detaining Power should not thereby be relieved of its obligations; recognition should merely be given to that Power's inability, due to limited means, to care for all the wounded and sick in its charge.

The National Societies, and the American Red Cross in particular, were greatly interested by this plan and agreed to its immediate inception. This meant the creation at Geneva, under the Committee's supervision, of a large stock of medications, surgical instruments, hospital stores and dressings,

¹ The British Red Cross gave exact instructions for the proper issue of malted cod-liver oil, as follows:

Monthly dose per man:

For TB sanatoria: 4,550 grams;

General Hospitals

and Infirmarys: 1,850

The other British nationals interned in Germany (PW and civilians), who were assessed at some 160,000, received an average monthly ration of 10 grams per head.

The armistice prevented the completion of this scheme, which was to cover a six months period.

upon which it could draw for all Allied PW. Pharmaceutical products and surgical instruments were to be sent according to requirements to the head physicians of infirmaries and to PW camp hospitals in Germany and in countries occupied by the German and Italian forces. The above supplies were to be employed for all PW without distinction of nationality.

The countries which agreed to a scheme for financing the pool were : Belgium, France, Greece, Holland, Jugoslavia, Norway, Poland and the United States. The British Red Cross, which had just built up its own stock at Geneva, elected not to participate. The American Red Cross further presented to the Committee a sum of 100,000 dollars ; converted into Swiss francs, these funds allowed certain consignments to be completed.

The pool was formed by two series of shipments. The first took place between October 1944 and March 1945, and the second between January and August 1945. The total weight of these shipments exceeded 1,400 tons.

In the spring of 1945, 70% of these goods were ready for immediate dispatch and issue to PW camps ; 30% was to remain in Geneva for routine indents. The trend of events in Germany however completely upset this plan ; from March onwards, increasing use had to be made of block-trains and road convoys, so that the largest stocks possible might be sent to the camps that were still accessible. In all, some 100 tons of medicines were dispatched during March, April and May 1945, to permanent and assembly camps in Southern Germany and Austria. These stores included mainly specific remedies against dysentery, diphtheria, tuberculosis, affections of the digestive tract and dermatosis.

Shortly after the Armistice the American Red Cross requested the ICRC to make no further call on the pool without fresh instructions ¹.

(b) — *Relief in transit.*

A clear distinction must first be drawn between relief in " direct " transit and relief in " indirect " transit.

¹ See p. 304 for final disposal of pooled stocks.

Direct transit was the passage through the Committee's hands of parcels bearing an exact address. *Indirect transit* was the movement of standard parcels placed at the Committee's free disposal, which arrived at Geneva already packed and ready for dispatch. These parcels did not arise from specific requests; they were an addition to standard foodstuff and clothing consignments, made in proportion to the camp strength. Thus the various types of parcels in "indirect" transit, i. e. the medical, surgical and invalid comfort parcels of the British Red Cross and the medical kits of the American Red Cross were handled in the same way as the standard parcels of all other types¹.

From 1942 onwards, the ICRC forwarded small consignments of parcels in transit for Germany which donors were unable to send direct: they included gifts from the British Red Cross for British nationals, and from the American Red Cross for Belgian PW. After 1944, the volume of parcels entrusted to the ICRC in transit, particularly for British, Belgian and French PW², increased considerably.

Though the direct transit system was, as a general rule, a practical means of sending PW the exact relief they asked for, it clearly had many drawbacks. Owing to the progressive destruction of means of transport, the period of time for a parcel to reach its destination steadily increased. The disbandment or the evacuation of a large number of camps still further complicated matters; parcels frequently arrived only after several weeks, or even months; many could not be delivered and were returned to Geneva.

¹ See pp. 207 et seq.

² British transit parcels which arrived in Geneva totalled 29 tons, French transit parcels 14 tons and Belgian transit parcels 39 tons. Military events prevented the dispatch of all these consignments. Such shipments as the ICRC found possible were carried out between November 1944 and May 1945, and went to PW of the above nationalities; after the close of hostilities, some consignments also reached repatriation centres.

The use to which the balance of these transit supplies were put is explained below, p. 304.

(c) — *Gifts in kind.*

Besides the goods supplied by Governments or National Red Cross Societies for their own nationals or those of their Allies, the ICRC received many donations from Red Cross Societies, private welfare organizations and private individuals. Donors either specified the recipients, or asked the ICRC to use the gifts in its general medical relief schemes for PW and political deportees.

The chief donors were the South African Red Cross (which sent large quantities of fish-liver oil—principally for consumptive PW—numerous sera and vaccines), the Canadian Red Cross (vitaminised products, insulin, sera, vaccines and sundry medicaments), the American, Argentine, Brazilian, British, Rumanian and Uruguayan Red Cross Societies, and the French residents and the “Pro Hollanda” Committee in Buenos Ayres. Many Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers also contributed gifts in kind for all categories of PW.

(d) — *Purchases.*

The funds given to the ICRC for medical relief work were used for purchases in Switzerland and abroad.

Purchases in Switzerland. — These far exceeded those made abroad. The products bought by the Committee from the Swiss manufacturers were mainly intended to supplement consignments from abroad. The purchase of any kind of medicament in whatever quantity was, however, beset by numerous difficulties. The output of many products fell during the war, and owing to the fear of a shortage, the export of medicaments was forbidden. Nevertheless, the Swiss Federal authorities granted the ICRC all possible facilities and showed respect for the Committee's peculiar situation. After the armistice the restrictions on exports were gradually lifted and it became possible to export all the products made in Switzerland, though delays were sometimes protracted.

When making such purchases the ICRC generally gave preference to branded goods ; though more expensive, these could be relied on for purity and careful manufacture. Many Swiss chemical firms granted substantial rebates.

Purchases abroad. — During the war, the ICRC almost entirely gave up buying abroad, as deliveries took far too long and administrative and transport difficulties were excessive. As soon as hostilities were over, however, the ICRC used every opportunity to buy the largest possible quantity of medicaments in the foreign market, provided rates were satisfactory. These purchases, particularly those made in the United States, had the advantage of not requiring exchange operations. When buying from American Army surplus stocks the ICRC was given priority and enjoyed other concessions.

Narcotics. — The export of narcotics being subject to international regulations, after various negotiations the ICRC was allowed, under Federal regulations, to buy, forward and export the narcotics required. Similarly, the foreign countries concerned granted the necessary permits for the import of such drugs. Thus, the many applications and formalities involved in the purchase and issue of narcotics were reduced to a minimum.

To avoid the loss of time due to belated delivery, the ICRC established in Geneva a stock of its purchases in Switzerland, including essential medicaments and dentists' supplies ; this so-called "Specialities Stock", enabled the ICRC to make large consignments, sometimes two or three days only after receiving the indent.

Epidemics. — The ICRC also built up a large stock for use in the event of epidemics. This reserve of disinfectants, sera, vaccines, cardiacs, etc., valued at some 500,000 Swiss francs, allowed of rapid action to prevent epidemics of exanthematic disease in Rumania and Hungary, and of other epidemics in Germany and Holland. Fortunately, it was not found necessary to draw upon the whole of this reserve, since those epidemics that occurred in Europe were, as a rule, less

severe than might have been feared. At the close of the war, the balance of this reserve was taken over by the *Don Suisse* (Swiss Relief Fund).

(e) — *Individual Relief.*

Applications for medical and pharmaceutical relief made by individual PW should, under the general rule, have been dealt with by the Individual Relief Section; they were however referred to the Pharmaceutical Section, which was better equipped to select and purchase the specialities forming the bulk of the requirements.

The number of parcels sent in response to individual applications was comparatively large. A great deal of work was involved in their purchase, packing and checking, and in attendant formalities, but the parcels were often invaluable to PW suffering from serious or little-known diseases, whom the camp doctors were unable to treat with the camp medical resources.

(f) — *Warehouses.*

The handling of the medicaments and the manual work generally was done in several warehouses, the chief of which were the bonded warehouses at Cornavin and Plainpalais, both in Geneva. These stores housed large stocks, as mentioned above, for which the Pharmaceutical Section was responsible to the Allied donors. A few months before the armistice, the supplies for Axis PW were lodged in the same warehouses. Products bought in Switzerland were kept apart in other premises.

(g) — *Liquidation of stocks and of supplies in transit.*

The fact—at first sight surprising—that Geneva still had considerable quantities of medicaments at the close of the war was due to late deliveries and arrivals in transit.

The stocks of the British Red Cross, for instance, were still very large. In October, responding to the Committee's request, that Society made the whole amount available to the ICRC, with the proviso that priority should be given to the needs of

the Polish Red Cross in Poland (which received 30 tons of supplies), and of British nationals in Budapest, Prague, Warsaw and Vienna. From October 1945 until June 30, 1947, the ICRC was further able to send some 32 tons of British supplies to Displaced Persons.

The stocks of the American Red Cross, in September 1946, still included 100 standard assortments of fifteen parcels each ("Men's Medical Kits"), i. e. some 33 tons of supplies. These were made over by the American Red Cross to the League. The latter requested the ICRC to allocate these stocks between certain National Red Cross Societies, including those of Austria, Hungary, Poland and Rumania.

The relief shipments in transit which could not be forwarded to PW camps were allocated as follows: 38 tons belonging to the Belgian Government were, on its request, returned to Belgium, less fifteen tons which were issued to Belgian nationals. The balance of French supplies in transit was sent to the sanatoria in the Black Forest where French former PW and deportees were undergoing treatment.

The ICRC warehouses also contained, at the close of the war, a large part of the stocks forming the "pool", mentioned above. Some consignments did not reach Geneva till after the armistice. It was not until February, 1946, that the ICRC received final instructions as to the disposal of these stocks. They were divided as follows:

Poland received 366 tons	=	28 %
UNRRA purchased close on 657 tons (for		
Austria and Italy)	=	50,5%
The American Joint Distribution Committee		
bought 51 tons (handed to the Joint Relief		
Commission for distribution)	=	4 %
Belgium received about 55 tons	=	4,3%
Netherlands received about 13 tons	=	1 %

The dressings (146 tons) included in the stocks belonged to the American Red Cross and were given by that Society to the Swiss Red Cross, which issued them to various Swiss hospitals.

(h) — *Allotment of costs.*

During the war all the medical and pharmaceutical relief given to Allied PW was financed by the "Allied Levy"¹.

After the armistice, a new system of financing was introduced. Five per cent of all funds placed at the disposal of the Pharmaceutical Section was set aside for overhead costs, and a further 15% was held in reserve. Transit, insurance, and other expenses were met out of this reserve, and any credit balance was paid into the Committee's general relief funds.

(B). — *German and Austrian Prisoners of War*

Up to the end of 1944, applications for medical and pharmaceutical aid received by the ICRC from German PW or civilian internees in North and South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, India and Great Britain were forwarded direct to the German Red Cross. That Society then sent the required supplies and the ICRC despatched them to the applicants. At that time, health conditions among the German PW were still satisfactory and comparatively little assistance was needed.

After the end of 1944, however, the position underwent a sudden change: very large numbers of Germans were taken prisoner and certain Detaining Powers were abruptly faced with extremely difficult problems. The situation of the German PW soon deteriorated, both as regards food and their state of health. In France particularly, the requirements reported by the Committee's delegates and by the German camp doctors soon became very extensive.

The ICRC at once approached the German Red Cross and, in January 1945, laid the following proposals before that Society:

(1) — The German Red Cross should at once prepare standard kits containing medicaments, dressings and medical necessities as the basis of emergency supplies, for all German PW camps in France and North Africa. In the light of information

¹ See p. 270.

received and of its former experience, the ICRC submitted a model for a standard parcel suited to this particular purpose.

(2) — A stock of medicaments supplied by the German Red Cross should be stored in bond in Geneva, thus enabling the ICRC to give immediate effect to the applications that were reaching it from all quarters.

The ICRC also proposed a substantial increase of the relief supplies sent in transit, and stressed that transport difficulties seemed likely to increase still further and that very long delays would no doubt elapse between the applications for relief and the delivery of the supplies.

Despite several letters of reminder, mainly asking the German Red Cross to remit funds for the purchase in Switzerland by the ICRC of the most urgently required medicaments, no affirmative reply reached Geneva by the armistice. The German Red Cross could no more than despatch five railway wagons, notified in April 1945, and containing medical relief stores among other articles. These wagons, however, never reached Geneva.

At the same time, the ICRC itself endeavoured to relieve the German PW and at once set about collecting funds. At the close of 1944 a first contribution of 10,000 Swiss francs was paid to the Pharmaceutical Section, which was able to issue medicaments to the German PW who were detained in French territory near Geneva. In all, and up to April 30, 1945, the Pharmaceutical Section received 41,000 Swiss francs; it was thus able, on the strength of lists of patients received, to buy the necessary medicaments in Switzerland and despatch them to camps and hospitals in France, Corsica and North Africa. Furthermore, in April 1945, standard assortments of essential medicines, dressings and disinfectants, were sent to the ICRC delegations in Paris and in Lyons, for issue to camps and hospitals.

France. — After the armistice the situation of German PW in France generally became critical. This was apparently

due to transport and food difficulties, which were accentuated by the mass transfers of prisoners to the French by the American military command.

Some of the camps lacked even the barest necessities ; to meet this emergency the Committee sent medical kits containing minor surgical instruments, dressings, anaesthetics and disinfectants. Later on, a quantity of assorted medicines were handed to the Paris delegation for distribution.

This initial scheme was, however, inadequate, and the prisoners' state of health became steadily worse. Loss of weight, starvation oedema, bone diseases, hypovitaminosis, intestinal affections and various complaints due to malnutrition were reported. Proper medical treatment was urgently required. The shortage of soap and disinfectants gave rise to all kinds of skin diseases and facilitated the spread of vermin.

The ICRC thereupon made an urgent appeal to the American military authorities, who agreed to supply the ICRC with a large quantity of medical stores. It was decided that each German PW camp holding 3,500 men or more, should have a standard assortment (described as " CAD Basic Medical Unit ") comprising four tons of pharmaceutical products, dressings and instruments. These assortments were similar to those provided for the relief of the civilian population of the liberated countries in Europe.

The following figures give some idea of the quantities of medical and pharmaceutical stores handed over to the ICRC by the American military authorities :

Pharmaceutical products, dressings, and disinfectants	296 tons
(issued to 69 German PW centres in France, and four centres in the French occupation zone)	
Soap	363 "
DDT powder	89 "

The scheme was abandoned before each camp had received its allotted share ; the ICRC was then obliged to divide the

total amount and share out a certain number of assortments to each camp and centre. Thus, all the large PW centres received substantial quantities, between October and December 1945.

The happy effects of this extensive scheme were soon observed ; after the end of 1945 and during the early months of 1946, the fortnightly reports furnished to the ICRC by the spokesmen showed that the health situation was at first stabilised, and then rapidly improved. In one centre, for instance, cases of wasting and debility fell by 75% between October 1945 and December 1946, and deficiency diseases disappeared.

The American assortments contained an excess of certain medicines, whilst others were inadequate or entirely absent. The Committee had to make the best use of excess products and make up for deficiencies.

In the small labour detachments the health of the men remained poor ; dressings and the most essential medicines were still short. Between November 1945 and June 1947, the ICRC supplied them with 2,000 small medical kits with appropriate contents.

The ICRC further decided to build up stocks at their various Delegations in France, particularly in Paris and Lyons, to allow shortages in regular consignments from Geneva to be rapidly made up. This was an expert matter, and a qualified dispensing chemist was appointed at the Paris delegation, to co-ordinate all medical and pharmaceutical relief schemes in France. His department kept in touch with the camp doctors and dispensers and could thus inform the ICRC of current requirements.

During 1946, the ICRC also provided German PW doctors with some 650 surgical sets, enabling them to perform minor operations themselves and thus avoid sending the patients to a central infirmary or district hospital. Hospitals and permanent infirmaries for German PW also received equipment, such as blood-pressure gauges, sedimentation apparatus, surgical instruments, and so on.

North Africa. Corsica. — The ICRC also supplied medical stores to PW camps in these areas. The consignments included

standard assortments of anaesthetics, disinfectants and dressings and, later, collections of medicines. In addition, medical parcels were sent direct in reply to specific requests.

Jugoslavia. — During the summer of 1945, the health of German PW in this country was affected by two circumstances : first, the danger of an exanthematic epidemic, and secondly, the appearance of a new disease, found only among these men, and then called "German nephritis". The chief symptoms were diarrhoea and oedema, together with albuminuria and blood pressure. On occasion it took the proportions of an epidemic, though its infectious nature was never established. It was apparently due partly to vitamin B deficiency, in conjunction with a lack of mineral salts. The PW also suffered from bacillary dysentery, which was very widespread owing to recent events in this country.

The first consignments sent to Jugoslavia from Geneva in the autumn of 1945 were complete assortments which furnished hospitals and the chief PW camps with first-aid equipment and essential medical requirements. More detailed information on conditions in Jugoslavia thereafter reached Geneva, and the Committee's delegation in Belgrade, in agreement with the Yugoslav Red Cross and the authorities, made issues of insecticides, typhus vaccines, anti-diarrhoeics, cardiacs and vitamin products. In July 1946 further standard assortments were sent to PW hospitals and camps.

Altogether, the ICRC supplied German PW in Jugoslavia with 334 parcels weighing 16,865 kilograms and valued at 161,488 Swiss francs.

Austria. — The medical and pharmaceutical stores sent by the ICRC to the small number of German PW detained in Austria consisted at first of distributions made from December 1945 onwards in the Vorarlberg and in the Tyrol ; similar issues were later on made in the camps of the American and British Zones. On learning that repatriated PW were due to arrive from Russia and Jugoslavia, the ICRC despatched large quantities of supplies to the main reception centres at Innsbruck and Linz

in particular. Hospital trains sent to Yugoslavia to fetch sick PW were also provided with medical stores.

The consignments sent to Austria throughout 1946 and during the early months of 1947 amounted in all to 238 parcels, weighing 8,350 kilos and valued at 71,095 Swiss francs.

Occupation Zones in Germany. — A certain number of German ex-servicemen were detained in the occupation zones of Germany, in camps and labour detachments, or in the "prohibited areas". From November 1945 to March 1946, the ICRC provided the camps with standard assortments, medicines, insecticides and dressings.

The ICRC also gave medical aid to PW repatriated from France, Yugoslavia and Russia, largely with the 16 tons of medical stores supplied by the Americans for the relief of the PW in French hands, as mentioned above. On the request of the French authorities, the Committee also sent similar stores to the Stromberg sanatorium for the treatment of repatriated German PW.

In June 1947, the Committee sent their Berlin Delegation over six tons of pharmaceutical and medical stores for German PW repatriated to the Soviet Zone, particularly for the repatriation centre at Frankfort-on-the-Oder.

The consignments sent to Germany totalled some 30 tons, of which 11,650 kilograms were for PW detained in camps and 11,850 kilograms for repatriates to the Soviet zone.

Belgium. — The German PW in Belgium, most of whom worked in the mines, suffered for a time from the shortage of dressings and disinfectants. The Belgian authorities endeavoured, from the outset, to improve their situation. The ICRC was thus only called upon to contribute a few consignments, particularly by first-aid kits and products which were in short supply. Towards the middle of 1946 this relief discontinued, as Belgium was able to meet all the requirements of such PW as has not been repatriated.

Poland. — Here, the Committee began, in September 1946, by sending supplies to the camp at Jaworzno, which held a great number of sick and disabled Germans. Later reports stated that this consignment had greatly improved the men's state of health. Assortments of medicines, dressings and surgical instruments were issued to the PW working in the Silesian coalmines, as soon as the ICRC received permission to visit their camps. Two hundred small standard medicine chests were also given to labour detachments.

Later, the Warsaw Delegation built up a stock which was regularly replenished for use in emergencies.

In all, 575 packages weighing 18 tons and valued at 107,767 Swiss francs were sent to German PW in Poland.

Other countries. — Medical and pharmaceutical supplies to the value of some 10,000 Swiss francs were also sent to German PW in other countries, particularly Italy, the Middle East and the Netherlands, as also to German civilians interned in South America, Arabia and Australia.

(C). — *Italian Prisoners of War and Military Internees*

The camps in which Italian PW and military internees were detained during the war, were scattered throughout several countries, and even different continents. The attempts made by the Committee to give these men medical and pharmaceutical relief therefore could not, as in other cases mentioned above, be carried out along uniform and regular lines.

India. — In 1942, the Committee distributed in PW camps about one ton of medicaments received from the Italian Red Cross.

North Africa. — From 1942 to 1945, several consignments were distributed, including large quantities of insecticide and a number of surgical instruments in Algeria. From September 1945 onwards, a fairly large number of mixed medical consignments were issued in that area.

France and Corsica — Many individual applications reached Geneva and were given attention. From June 1944 to July 1945, similar requests from Italian military internees in Switzerland were met.

These activities were financed by the Italian Red Cross and by gifts from Italian military internees in Switzerland; Italians detained in Germany and Jugoslavia were the chief beneficiaries.

Germany. — Italian military internees in Germany were not considered as PW¹, and the ICRC was consequently denied access to their camps. Supplies could not therefore be sent to them direct, but were forwarded through the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin, who had authority to distribute the medical stores sent from Geneva. In this manner, 40 standard assortments, chiefly for the treatment of malaria, to which the Italian forces in Greece, the Balkans and Africa were prone, were bought and distributed in August 1944 with contributions made by the Relief Committee for Italian Internees, in Lausanne. Another remittance from the same body, added to a sum of 15,000 Swiss francs drawn from the ICRC's own funds, enabled dispatches to be made to these Italians until the armistice.

Jugoslavia. — From the autumn of 1945, the Committee's efforts were directed chiefly to the provision of medical relief for Italian PW detained in Jugoslavia. In October 1945, standard parcels, dressings and other articles were issued in nine hospitals. A month later, a further seven mixed consignments were despatched to Jugoslavia; their contents had been prescribed by the Committee's delegate in Belgrade and the Italian Red Cross delegate in Geneva, and comprised chiefly medicines for cases of exanthematic typhus, specialities for nephritis and calcium tonics for consumptives.

In the autumn of 1945 further assortments were sent to the Italian Red Cross delegates in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria (medicines, dressings, typhus vaccine and insecticides) for the Italians still detained in those countries.

¹ See Vol. I, p. 535.

Distribution Schedule

	Purchase value (in Swiss francs)
Italian Military Internees in Switzerland. . .	1,373
Italian PW in North Africa	11,210
" " France and Corsica	1,075
" " Germany	36,332
" " Jugoslavia.	17,726
" " Austria	4,453
" " Czechoslovakia.	1,050
" " Poland	8,753
" " other Countries	1,137
" " repatriated to Italy.	12,491
Total . . .	95,600
Gifts in kind (Swiss medicaments)	17,350
Total value (all medicaments purchased in Switzerland)	<u>112,950</u>

(D). — *Civilian Internees*

The ICRC seized every possible opportunity to provide civilian internees with medical and pharmaceutical relief. Parcels of medical supplies were issued in large quantities to camps for British, Norwegian, Russian and Yugoslav internees in Germany and Italy. Later on, especially after the autumn of 1945, similar supplies were sent to German civilians interned in France.

As a general rule, these consignments were subject to the same difficulties as the supplies for PW, and were handled as described in previous chapters.

(E). — *Displaced Persons*

1. Needs

Health conditions amongst the "Displaced Persons" were an immediate source of concern to the ICRC, and information on the subject was sought immediately after the armistice, particularly in Germany and Austria.

From the close of June, requests for medical relief supplies reached the ICRC direct from camp doctors and UNRRA teams. In every case an almost complete lack of medicaments was reported. Some doctors even travelled to Geneva to ask for indispensable supplies. The Committee's delegates were, for their part, gathering all available information. The ICRC then decided to send a mission to Germany and another to Austria. The object of the first mission, which went to Bavaria, was to obtain first-hand information and to make immediate issues of the medical supplies that had already arrived there.

In August and September 1945, further medical missions, organised jointly by the ICRC and the Swiss Red Cross, went to Germany, to deal with the health in general of displaced persons, and to establish local co-ordination between the ICRC, the Swiss Relief Fund and the Swiss Red Cross. On the strength of information supplied by these missions, further issues were made by the ICRC during the autumn of 1945, particularly in the Bayreuth area of the American Zone.

Several pharmaceutical missions were also sent to Austria, after October 1945, and distributed quantities of stores in the camps for displaced persons.

Health conditions amongst displaced persons in Germany were gradually brought under control ; this was due in particular to the large relief supplies distributed by UNRRA, especially in the American Zone. Consequently, the ICRC reserved the greater part of its medical supplies for displaced persons in Austria and Italy.

2. Gifts in kind

From June 1945 onwards, Allied PW and deportees were repatriated with great rapidity ; the ICRC consequently decided to divert to displaced persons stores which had been originally built up for PW. On being consulted, the British Red Cross agreed that the medical supplies stocked in Geneva for British PW should, as from October 1945, be employed partly for the Polish civilian population, but chiefly for displaced persons of Allied nationality. These stocks included over 32 tons of pharmaceutical products, dressings, and so forth.

Other medical stores held by the ICRC abroad, particularly in Southern Germany and Upper Austria, were quickly disposed of during the summer of 1945, as first aid to displaced persons. The first distributions took place in the American Zones of Germany and Austria, and were later extended to the British and French Zones in these countries.

3. Cash donations

The ICRC also devoted to the relief of displaced persons of various nationalities a sum of about 105,000 Swiss francs, originally intended for the purchase of relief supplies for Allied PW. These funds consisted of a gift of 47,000 Swiss francs from the Santista Mills, at Sao Paulo, part of which had been previously utilised for Allied PW, and a sum of about 22,000 Swiss francs deriving from a collection made by German PW in the United States, who had requested that part of the proceeds should be used for displaced persons. With this money the ICRC purchased medicaments in Switzerland, which were a useful addition to the medical stores drawn from stocks abroad.

The ICRC was also called upon to assist particular categories of displaced persons, and for this purpose received 85,000 Swiss francs from the Estonian Delegation in the United States, to provide medical relief for Estonian displaced persons in Germany and Austria. A further 34,000 Swiss francs was presented by the Latvian Delegation for relief to displaced persons of that nationality. Lastly 11,000 Swiss francs, handed to the ICRC by the United Ukrainian Relief Committee in the United States, helped to give medical relief (dental supplies in particular) to displaced Ukrainians. Seven tons of medical and pharmaceutical stores were also given by the Ukrainian Canadian Relief Fund.

4. Relief operations

In all areas where the ICRC issued medical supplies, close cooperation was maintained with UNRRA, the military occupation authorities and the National Red Cross Societies, especially with the British Red Cross.

Germany. — In the American Zone, the issue of medical supplies from the stocks set up locally by the ICRC was quickly put through in the early summer of 1945; the supplies were collected by UNRRA lorries from the ICRC stock. In the British Zone, distributions started at the beginning of September 1945, through the Committee's delegations at Lübeck and Vlotho, and were continued through the British Red Cross H.Q. and UNRRA. In the French Zone, the ICRC sent consignments direct to the camps, and established a stock at the Rastatt Central Depot, which was under the *Direction centrale des personnes déplacées* of the Health Department of the French Military Government. An agreement was subsequently reached with the French occupation authorities, providing that requests for medicines received from DP camps which could be met neither by purchases on the local market, nor by the Rastatt Depot, should be referred to the ICRC. The latter was thus able to supply medicaments and pharmaceutical products that were not otherwise available.

Austria. — Distributions in Austria were carried out by the Committee's delegations, in close cooperation with the military authorities of the three zones, the British Red Cross and the PDR (Prisoners, Deportees, Refugees) Section of the French Military Government.

Italy. — Some consignments were issued by the Committee's delegations in North and South Italy to camps for displaced persons of various nationalities.

5. Example of Relief Work

The delegation at Linz (Upper Austria) was stationed in an area which contained a particularly large number of DPs¹. Its work can be taken as typical.

¹ In June 1945, their number represented one-fifth of the entire population of Upper Austria.

Fifteen tons of medicaments, restoratives, dressings, disinfectants, etc., were issued in the period up to the autumn of 1945. Thereafter, the Committee replenished the delegation's stocks at regular intervals, supplying 24 tons in all. The delegation was thus able to assist the displaced person in camps, infirmaries and hospitals, and to issue medical stores to the convoys of DPs travelling through Linz towards the West. Several qualified chemists were sent to Linz, to share out the stocks. In August 1946, a first-aid post was set up at Enns, on the frontier between the American and Russian zones, to assist the train-loads of repatriates passing through that town.

The health of many children was improved by regular doses of cod-liver oil; concentrated vitamin-D tablets for infants in arms did much to prevent cases of rickets.

From May 1945 until March 1947, when the delegation was withdrawn, 589 issues of medical stores were made to DPs, as follows :

Issues to camps	438
„ „ hospitals and camp infirmaries	42
„ „ national and regional Committees	60
„ „ sundry National Red Cross Branches	25
„ „ repatriation convoys.	<u>24</u>
Total . . .	589

In addition to collective aid, the delegation also made up individual prescription for over 4,000 DPs.

§ 2. ARTIFICIAL LIMBS, SURGICAL APPLIANCES, ETC.

The medical aid provided by the ICRC for PW and internees was not confined to consignments of medical stores, but also included artificial limbs, surgical appliances, dentures, spectacles, and so on. Article 14 of the 1929 PW Convention stipulates that "temporary remedial apparatus" shall be supplied to PW by the Detaining Power. This general provision

was interpreted in various ways, and PW were often given appliances in no way suitable for several months or years of captivity.

In these circumstances, the ICRC first attempted to induce the Detaining Powers to apply Article 14 in a more generous spirit, and in particular to replace inadequate temporary apparatus by provisional prostheses that might be regarded as semi-permanent. Where such steps were unavailing, the ICRC had to satisfy the most urgent needs by relief supplies.

Although this class of supplies was of minor importance in comparison to other consignments, the subject deserves close consideration, for this branch of the Committee's undertakings was especially complex and called for special organization.

The surgical appliances required may be divided into four classes :

- (1) — Dentures.
- (2) — Artificial limbs.
- (3) — Artificial eyes.
- (4) — Hernia trusses and other surgical apparatus.

(a) — *Allied Prisoners of War.*

Article 14 of the Convention states that PW camps shall have infirmaries where they may receive attention of any kind, at the expense of the Detaining Power. This attention therefore includes dental treatment and artificial limbs. Article 14 thus implies the presence of a staff of dentists, in addition to surgeries and workshops adequate in proportion to the number of PW and dentists, together with ample and regular issues of dental material and supplies of all kinds.

The provision regarding " temporary apparatus " is certainly unsatisfactory. Temporary dentures are obviously of no value to men whose detention is prolonged ; prostheses of this kind can be of service for a few days, or a few weeks at the outside, while the gums are being treated and permanent dentures made. Such want of precision cannot however explain the non-obs-

vance of Article 14 by Germany, and by Italy in particular. The following seem to have been the chief reasons for lack of dental care :

- (1) — Scarcity of dentists and dental mechanics.
- (2) — Inadequate installations.
- (3) — Shortage of essential stores.
- (4) — Mass arrival of PW in camps.

The ICRC soon discovered that in the two countries mentioned the steadily increasing number of patients compelled the dentists to confine treatment to the relief of actual pain and the sometimes quite unnecessary extraction of decayed teeth.

The number of men without teeth quickly rose and led to a corresponding increase of gastric affections. The workshops were soon overwhelmed, and to relieve the pressure of work the dentists apparently kept as strictly as possible to the letter of Article 14.

One of the Committee's first tasks was to determine the lowest degree of masticatory capacity below which the Detaining Powers should be obliged to supply dentures to PW. The Committee's representations led to no appreciable results, the belligerents objecting that they could not give PW in their hands the dental treatment and dentures which were denied to their own armed forces. Thus, PW taken by armed forces in which dental treatment was confined to the most urgent cases were at a disadvantage ; this was the case in particular for Allied prisoners in Germany.

The Committee received a great many appeals from PW who were not given conservative treatment and whose teeth were promptly extracted, although the Detaining Power declined to bear the costs of even temporary dentures.

These appeals were partly met, in so far as the ICRC was able to send individual and collective relief parcels to the PW camps.

Individual relief in cash.

In individual cases, civilian dentists employed by the camp were reimbursed the cost of dentures made for Allied PW.

Means had to be found of checking such supplies of dentures, and this involved more office work. Early in 1942, the interested Red Cross Societies agreed to the Committee's opening separate accounts for this purpose, and gave credits over which the Committee had autonomous control.

Each case had to be carefully examined in order to apportion costs between the Detaining Power and the National Red Cross ; to this effect, the Committee engaged a qualified dentist to assess each case in the light of the reports which the camp doctor, or the dentist in attendance was asked to supply.

This work involved extensive correspondence. On receiving an application, the ICRC invited the camp doctor to submit an estimate of costs, which was then examined and passed. Instructions for treatment were then issued to the doctor in charge, with a request for an invoice. After the treatment had been given, the invoice was countersigned by the patient and forwarded to Geneva ; if the bill was passed, the claim was paid to the camp doctor. Matters were still more complicated when the treatment was given by a civilian dentist not resident in the camp.

This method was hampered by the dilatory procedure required and the insufficient funds placed at the Committee's disposal by the Red Cross Societies. From 1942 to 1945, Geneva never had enough money to assist even the most severe cases, not to mention those whose condition was daily becoming worse. Funds allocated for the purpose were at once discovered to be insufficient to cover even some proportion of the cases awaiting treatment.

The ICRC tried to meet the situation, which caused them great concern, by increasing the supplies of relief in kind.

Individual relief in kind.

Such relief, in the shape of raw material for the manufacture of dentures or false teeth, was only provided in a very few cases, the risk of loss being too great in time of war.

Collective relief.

Collective supplies were always sent in the shape of stores and material, but in no case in cash.

At the exact moment when the ICRC was engaged in organizing a collective relief scheme, appeals from help suddenly began to arrive from all quarters, in particular from Germany. Geneva was submerged by a flood of applications, and the position was rendered more acute by the general shortage of dental supplies, both in Switzerland and abroad.

Requests came direct from PW dentists and camp leaders, still more frequently from the Committee's own delegates or those of the YMCA, and from Red Cross Societies.

The ICRC had three sources of dental supplies: (1) gifts in kind from Allied Red Cross Societies, (2) collections in Switzerland and (3) purchases of raw material in Switzerland with funds subscribed by various donors.

In 1943, the British Red Cross sent to Geneva a number of parcels of various types, called "Dental Units". They were packed in such a manner that direct transmission was impossible; the ICRC thereupon suggested, and the British Red Cross agreed, that a stock of material from Great Britain should be held in bond at Geneva. The Dental Units were unpacked and served to make up appropriate parcels for the camp dentists.

Further, the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission made a collection of dental material in Switzerland and shared the proceeds.

The ICRC also opened a workshop in their Dental Section, where disused dentures were broken up and cleaned, and artificial teeth assembled in sets. Gold or platinum clips and rivets were removed from unserviceable teeth. In all, the workshop recovered 180,000 artificial teeth, and gold and platinum to the value of 2,000 Swiss francs.

Purchases were made under the direction of a qualified dentist, and were closely checked for quality and price, both generally very unstable in this branch of trade.

The stocks comprised three categories: (1) purchases in Switzerland, (2) the proceeds of collections, (3) supplies from

abroad and in bond. The Committee frequently drew upon all three stocks to make up complete sets to meet the needs of the camps. Customs and export operations hampered the work, although the ICRC was given every facility by the authorities.

From 1943 to 1944, the parcels were sent by post, but the insurance companies eventually refused to cover any further war risks, and the ICRC despatched collective consignments by rail. This method, though slow, ensured safe arrival.

(b) — *German Prisoners of War.*

The ICRC was soon informed that German PW in France and elsewhere stood in urgent need of dental treatment, and that the health of a great many was seriously threatened, owing to insufficient mastication and consequent malnutrition.

An initial scheme aimed at opening dental surgeries, to deal with the most urgent first or second degree patients. Standard kits were made up and 56 were sent to France, two to Poland and one to Belgium.

The German PW dentists in charge of the surgeries thus established in France, North Africa and Corsica were given permission to make regular visits to the camps and larger labour detachments in their areas. Prisoners were also allowed to travel to the centres where dental surgeries had been opened.

The Committee did not confine itself to the opening of such centres ; it ensured a regular supply of stores of every kind : instruments, amalgam, dental cement, medicaments and so on. A shortage of certain supplies only could bring all dental treatment in a centre to a standstill. Anxious to respond promptly to requests from camp dentists, the Committee decided to centralize all demands at their Paris Delegation ; here large stocks were built up, from which the required stores could be at once taken and despatched.

With the help thus provided by the ICRC, the German dentists in France were, during 1947, able to treat some 50,000 patients monthly. In one centre, for instance, a single dentist, assisted by a dental mechanic, treated 14,280 German PW in the space of fifteen months.

Additional deliveries were made to German PW camps in France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy and Poland, to complete or replenish the equipment of existing centres.

Another scheme in this connexion was the opening of repair workshops in each of the ten military regions in France. German PW in need of dentures were sent for treatment to the hospitals where these workshops were installed. The latter were regularly supplied in raw material and instruments by Geneva, or direct by the Paris delegation. Six hundred new dentures were thus made each month, apart from numerous repairs.

The total supplies sent to German PW in France included 635 parcels of dental and surgical material, weighing about 12 tons and valued at about 350,000 Swiss francs.

2. Artificial Limbs

From 1940 onwards, the Committee paid close attention to the situation of amputee or seriously wounded PW. As the war lengthened, endeavours were made to keep a record of their numbers and names, and to ascertain the care they received, particularly as regards the supply of artificial limbs. It was apparent from the outset that, unless repatriation could be effected as soon as the healing of the patients' stumps made this possible, strict application of Article 14 became an obstacle to any modern methods of rehabilitating the war-disabled. The wearing of temporary appliances such as the Detaining Power is bound to supply, can in most cases only be prejudicial to the functional re-education which is required, if the patient is to use an articulated artificial limb. Since the obligation of the Detaining Power stopped at the supply of peg-legs or semi-articulated limbs, amputees not eligible for repatriation could not have the individualized medical gymnastics which are practised in special institutions.

The Committee made its chief efforts therefore to secure the early release of amputees and to induce the belligerents to conclude agreements to that effect.

In May 1941, negotiations for the exchange of seriously wounded between Germany and Great Britain failed, and the

ICRC was called upon to carry out special relief schemes. As a preliminary measure, the belligerents were asked for exact information regarding the number of PW amputees, the care they were given and the degree of cooperation which the ICRC might expect.

During hostilities, artificial limbs were almost exclusively supplied to Allied PW. Requests from Axis PW were few in number and could always be suitably satisfied, either by the Detaining Powers themselves or by the Committee's delegations, which used funds provided by the German Red Cross for this purpose.

Artificial limbs were especially required for British, American and Polish amputated PW in Germany ; the seriously wounded of other nationalities, and the Allied amputees detained in Italy were sent home before assistance of this nature was initiated.

Two courses were adopted: (1) the raw materials required for the manufacture of prostheses were furnished to the Detaining Power, or (2) experts were instructed to make plaster casts and take measurements, while the limbs were made in neutral countries.

Comparatively few consignments of material were made, as the manufacture of limbs in camps was difficult owing to the lack of trained labour and workshops. The cost of the consignments was borne by the Red Cross Societies concerned ¹.

More extensive assistance was given by a Swiss orthopaedic mission for British and Polish PW in Germany. Having secured the belligerents' consent to this undertaking, the ICRC first established a list of British and Polish amputees in German hands, with particulars of their condition and present location ; an estimate was made of the materials required and the itinerary and duration of the mission fixed. The British authorities were then given the approximate costs of the mission itself and of the appliances required.

¹ The first method of aid was particularly useful after the armistice for the Relief of German PW amputees held in the American Zone of Germany.

Through the Committee, it was agreed between the British and Swiss Governments that Switzerland should supply the necessary material while Great Britain would replace the leather, brass, lacquer, cotton and wool, but not the aluminium used. The German Government agreed to have the amputees assembled in six hospitals and granted the necessary visas and special permits to the Swiss experts.

The British Government having furnished the required funds for general expenses, the scheme was carried out as follows :

(1) — *First mission.* The Swiss experts visited the six assembly centres, took measurements and made the casts for the manufacture of the appliances in Switzerland.

(2) — *Manufacture of appliances.* This was done in five Swiss workshops and was a matter of some difficulty, as the work had to be done without trial fittings, which are usually frequent.

(3) — *Second mission.* The Swiss experts made a second journey to the assembly centres to fit and adjust the limbs which were almost completed. At the same time they took new measurements and made fresh casts for other amputees.

(4) — *Despatch of appliances.* The first three stages were somewhat protracted and the German authorities meanwhile arranged for the repatriation of the amputees, who received their artificial limbs just before leaving Germany.

3. "Ophthalmic Relief"

The supply of glass eyes and spectacles to PW was known as "Ophthalmic Relief".

As a rule, the provision of glass eyes by the Detaining Power encountered little or no difficulties, especially in the case of accidents occurring during captivity. Spectacles were often refused ; the belligerents did not, for instance, consider themselves bound to replace spectacles worn by PW prior to captivity.

Collective relief in this sphere was confined to providing sun glasses for PW in an African camp.

Individual cases were dealt with in agreement with the Joint Relief Commission. The latter had a large stock of lenses and frames, the result of a collection in Switzerland for PW and civilian victims of the war. The lenses were sorted by experts and sent free of charge to applicants. From January 1, 1942, to December 31, 1945, 25,100 pairs of spectacles were sent to Allied PW. From early December 1944 until June 30, 1947, Axis PW received 3,375 pairs. Each pair was sent in response to an individual request, usually accompanied by an oculist's prescription.

The ICRC had sometimes to satisfy special demands, particularly for cylindrical lenses which the Joint Relief Commission did not stock. Such prescriptions were handed to a Swiss optician, who submitted a preliminary estimate. The costs were met from the fund for surgical appliances contributed by National Societies.

4. Hernia Trusses and other Surgical Appliances

A great many PW, especially in Germany, complained that they could not obtain surgical belts, or elastic knee and other bandages which they required. This applied particularly to PW who had undergone abdominal operations before or after captivity.

Requests were also received for invalid carriages—these could unfortunately not be satisfied—and for special surgical appliances for permanent wear, which could not be classed as temporary apparatus.

For all these requests the ICRC wrote to the camp doctor and the applicant, asking for exact measurements, prescriptions, or other details. The articles were then ordered from Swiss manufacturers and despatched.

Chapter 5

Relief for Civilian Internees

Civilian internees having been placed in all respects, including relief supplies, on the same footing as prisoners of war, there is no need to repeat here what has been already said on the subject. We shall merely draw attention to the peculiar features of civilian relief.

(1). — *Absence of Military Discipline*

On enlistment in the forces, with the attendant military discipline, men rapidly lose the sense of social distinctions. This applies particularly to prisoners of war. The idea of wealth and poverty could only play a small part in their lives. At the most, certain PW received frequent parcels from home, whilst others, who were in poorer circumstances or who had no relatives, could expect nothing.

In civilian camps, on the contrary, social distinctions were very marked and created much ill-feeling. The consequent strained relations often made the choice of a camp leader a matter of no slight difficulty. In such cases the internees appointed a committee of three to five persons, selected from the various elements in the camp, to represent them with the camp administration or the welfare organizations. Such difficulties most often occurred in the early periods of captivity or during an emergency caused by aerial bombardments, transfers or similar incidents, whilst they subsided at calmer junctures, or when the internees had grown accustomed to their new way of life.

No particular complaints were voiced by the internees as regards the quantity or quality of their food, since all donors stipulated that this should be the same as that for PW. Free collective consignments of foodstuffs, clothing and footwear were greeted quite differently, however, by civilian internees than by prisoners. Members of the forces, whether PW or not, were accustomed to receiving their rations and equipment and, in a general way, whatever necessities might improve their living conditions. Civilians, on the contrary, who had always lived on their own resources, felt they were now a charge on welfare societies. Time and habit usually helped them to overcome this feeling.

Regular work, which was introduced in most camps, had an excellent effect. Where work was not possible, e.g. in tropical countries, the books, games and educational supplies given as a form of relief were genuinely beneficial.

(2). — *Lack of Pay and Wages*

Whereas pay or wages granted by the Detaining Powers enabled prisoners of war to buy essentials in the canteens open to them, the lack of pocket money created much discomfort among civilian internees, from 1939 onwards. The Red Cross Societies and home governments realised that it was indispensable to make internees monthly allowances in lieu of pay. The issue of these allowances was the concern of the Protecting Powers, and the ICRC was called upon only if these Powers were unable to carry out this task. This was so, generally, where small parties detained in outlying camps were involved. Donors reported such camps' requirements and requested that the nearest delegate should make the payments, in place of the Protecting Power. Instances of this were the German internees in French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, South Africa, the Portuguese colony of Goa (India), Jamaica and Tahiti, the Italian internees in the Belgian Congo, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Italian and German families residing in Iran and Iraq in conditions not unlike internment, and lastly certain Allied nationals interned in the Far East.

The belligerents agreed to the transfer of this pocket money and no difficulty arose in this respect. Complications were caused, however, by the demand of the German Red Cross that German Government funds should be issued only to German internees who had signed a declaration of loyalty to the Reich (*Reichstreue*) and to its head. Many internees who had lived for years overseas had to some extent lost touch with their home country and were not, like others, organized on a political basis; the above condition was therefore a frequent cause of misapprehension and ill-feeling in the camps, creating differences between the internees and their spokesmen, and making the task both of the ICRC and of the Protecting Power more difficult. Despite the extreme delicacy of the question, the ICRC finally induced the German Red Cross to allow spokesmen to give the loyalty clause the widest possible interpretation.

Occasionally, the forwarding of money was delayed by the same lack of communications that had prevented the Protecting Power itself from carrying out payments. For example, funds for Kingston Camp, Jamaica, had to be handled both by the ICRC and the Protecting Power: Geneva sent the funds to the London delegation, which forwarded them to the Swiss Vice-Consul in Jamaica. The money for the 29 German internees in Tahiti had to be sent direct to the spokesman, as neither the ICRC nor the Protecting Power had representatives on the island. Small parties of internees detained in transit in Ceylon, the Fijis and other Pacific islands, Aden, Cyprus and the Bermudas were in a similar position.

Allowances were paid monthly in particular camps, according to a schedule drawn up by the donors. Special relief had to provide for the internees not covered by this schedule, such as those in transit and new arrivals, who often lacked the barest necessities.

Thus, in 1942, the ICRC was called upon to send individual relief to some 8,000 inhabitants of the Channel Islands whom the occupying authorities had deported to Germany. This was not a case of mere internment, comparable with that of the British women held in the Vittel and Liebenau camps, but a

wholesale transfer of population. Similar situation arose when nationals of the Axis countries were first assembled and then interned in various parts of the Commonwealth. Relief for Allied civilians interned in Germany consisted in the dispatch of foodstuffs, clothing and medicaments, whereas assistance to nationals of Axis countries usually took the shape of funds sent to a local delegate, who made the most urgent purchases on the spot.

An example of such relief work was the help given to the crews of three German merchantmen interned in Mormugao, in Portuguese territory. The geographical isolation of this non-belligerent colony required the services of an ICRC delegate sent from Simla. Having noted the men's needs and handed funds to their spokesman, the delegate, acting in agreement with the British authorities, provided the men with articles of daily use purchased locally.

(3). — *Camps for Women and Children — Family Camps*

As the donating agencies and the ICRC discovered, interned women and children required more varied food supplies than prisoners of war. This was particularly so in family camps, containing as they did persons of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions. Relief supplies could only be sent on specific demand. Uncertainty as to the internees' real needs still further complicated matters. Goods from overseas were four to six months under way. Thus it was difficult to foresee so far ahead the number of layettes that would be required for babies born in the camps, or the number of garments necessary for children of different ages. Not until the close of 1942 was it possible to set up a department for the issue of clothing and other articles, drawn from the stocks constituted in Switzerland, on the grounds of the information furnished by camp representatives and camp authorities.

Difficulties also arose regarding food. The principal donors made up separate parcels for children. Throughout the war, it was, however, no easy matter to satisfy requests for special

foods, such as diets in particular. In the same way, the supply of cigarette and tobacco was not always simple. Some women internees thought they were entitled to extra food-rations instead of tobacco, and certain camp commandants tried to win over the ICRC and, indirectly, the donors to this view. Other women internees, on the contrary, insisted on their share of tobacco so as to be able to barter it for eggs or fresh vegetables. Most family camps also needed equipment for a kindergarten and teaching material for adult and children's classes. Workshops also had to be set up. One of the most successful camps in this particular connexion was that of Salisbury, in Southern Rhodesia.

After several years experience, the British Red Cross decided to provide weekly food parcels for men and women, and fortnightly parcels for children under ten. Other Societies, which were unable to issue more than one or two parcels a month, introduced standard rations for children. In 1941, the British Red Cross attempted to make issues of clothing, subject to promises of reimbursement—a condition which proved inapplicable, and which was rescinded in October 1943, after which date all relief was given free. When the United States entered the war, the American Red Cross at once adopted the same principle in its relief work for American civil internees.

The German and Italian Red Cross Societies sent almost no civilian clothing to their internees.

Civilians were not always subjected to the same forms of internment. Some merely had assigned residence ("Parole Centres" in India). Small parties of American or other diplomats were assigned residence in requisitioned hotels at Baden-Baden, Bad-Godesberg and elsewhere. At Bad-Godesberg, no less than seventeen different nationalities were represented.

A large proportion of civil internees in Italy were "confinati" or "isolati", a peculiar system of internment which placed severe difficulties on the supply of food, both because the delegates were barely able to exercise effective supervision of ration issues, and because the blockade authorities imposed precautionary restrictions.

Some 135 tons of foodstuffs were dispatched to small parties of civilian internees in Albania, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Holland and Hungary.

(4). — *Relief Schemes for Japanese Civilian Internees*

Early in January 1945 the Japanese Red Cross requested the ICRC to issue financial relief to Japanese civilian internees in Australia, Canada and India. No measures of this kind were contemplated for prisoners of war¹. The ICRC felt obliged to ask that Japanese PW should share in the relief funds supplied by the Japanese Red Cross and submitted an estimate of the amount likely to be required for this additional relief up to the close of 1945. In its reply the Japanese Red Cross, while agreeing that PW should benefit by these funds, would make no explicit request to this effect.

The funds were used as follows :

Australia. — In obedience to Japanese wishes, a small proportion of the monies allotted for relief work in Australia was divided between Japanese children in the camps. The balance was to be used thus : one-fifth to contribute towards an educational fund, and four-fifths to be shared between the 2,800 internees detained in Australia. The children having been given their share and the educational fund set up, the internees thought the balance could most usefully be entrusted to the Committee's delegate for the purchase of goods wholesale. The donors agreed, and the said part of the gift became the General Fund ; the ICRC delegate was commissioned by the internees themselves to buy various relief supplies. From July 1945 onwards, the Japanese PW also profited by both these funds, which were drawn upon until the repatriation of the majority of Japanese during the first half of 1946. In the autumn of that year the delegate further drew upon the funds to dispatch large quantities of relief to the Japanese who had

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 437 et seq.

surrendered or been taken prisoner, and whom he had recently visited at Rabaul. As all Japanese had left Australia by the end of 1946, the funds still available were returned to Geneva for the purchase of relief supplies for Japanese PW in Burma.

Canada and India. — In conformity with the instructions of the Japanese Red Cross, the funds were shared out between the internees ; thus the Committee's delegates merely had to transmit funds and collect receipts. Only a small balance was left in Canada.

Chapter 6

Relief to Civilian Detainees and Deportees

(1). — *Extent of Supplies*

A statement of the various stages of the work undertaken by the Committee for detained and deported civilians, unprotected through their lack of any definite status¹, will give a just idea of the constant attempts made to send relief supplies to the prisons, concentration camps, and ghettos converted into closed camps. The results obtained, meagre enough in relation to the numbers to be sustained, were by no means proportionate to the efforts made, which were beset with great and sometimes insuperable difficulties. These were such that relief action could only effectively begin in the summer of 1943. Although in 1942 *family parcels* were allowed in a few concentration camps, *individual parcels* from the ICRC and Red Cross Societies were only accepted in 1943. From the summer of 1944 onwards, the ICRC was at last able to despatch *collective relief consignments* to concentration camps.

During the second World War, the Committee sent to detained and deported civilians in German concentration camps 6,836 tons of supplies in all, representing 1,631,000 relief parcels issued to the French, Belgian, Norwegian, Polish, Dutch, Yugoslav, Czech and Greek detainees². From Nov. 1943 to May 1945, 1,112,000 parcels were despatched, chiefly containing

¹ See above, pp. 73 et seq.

² For distribution according to nationalities, see Annexes.

foodstuffs, and also underclothing and pharmaceutical products. Foodstuffs were sent in the shape of standard parcels, weighing from 2 to 4.5 kilograms, according to the supplies available and the regulations laid down by the Detaining Authorities. The parcels were nearly all made up in Geneva. Twelve thousand parcels of underclothing, weighing about 2 kilograms each were packed in Switzerland. They contained one undervest and one pair of pants for men, and one undervest and one pair of knickers for women. Standard pharmaceutical parcels, each weighing 650 grams and containing disinfectants, sulphamides vitamin preparations and dressings, were also made up in Switzerland; these totalled 19,250¹. From the autumn of 1944 onwards, the War Refugee Board in Washington handed the ICRC a total of 260,000 parcels for its relief action in German concentration camps. A first consignment of 15,000 food parcels (50,000 kilograms) was sent to Gothenburg in Sweden, and forwarded direct to concentration camps in North Germany. A second shipment of 224,328 food parcels (747,760 kilograms) reached Gothenburg at the end of 1944; of these, 39,325 were presented to the World Jewish Congress in Stockholm, and the balance of 185,005 parcels was sent to the Committee's delegate at Lübeck, who distributed them after the German surrender to detained and deported civilians of all nationalities in North German camps. A third consignment of 60,626 food parcels was made over to the Committee, early in 1945, in the port of Toulon; these were sent by rail or road through Switzerland to Germany, Austria and Hungary. The Jewish detainees in Vienna and Terezin (Theresienstadt) were given several thousands of these parcels.

In addition to these supplies, the American, British and Canadian Red Cross Societies handed to the ICRC in September 1944, for issue to deportees of all categories, the standard parcels for prisoners of war salvaged from the S. S. *Christina*, which had been sunk in the Mediterranean. The cargo was sorted and checked under expert advice before being dispatched to the concentration camps. In this manner, the Committee was

¹ See pp. 82-83.

able to forward to these camps a further 25,600 food parcels (54,756 kilograms), which were distributed as follows.

French	8,586 parcels
Belgians	4,304 "
Poles	4,220 "
Norwegians	3,615 "
Dutch	2,866 "
Czechs	800 "
Greeks	409 "
Jugoslavs	400 "
Spaniards	300 "
Italians	100 "

The ICRC also forwarded large quantities of supplies sent in bulk from France and Belgium, which were placed in bond in Geneva and made up into standard parcels for despatch to Germany. Further gifts were handed to the Committee by Jewish organizations for the relief of Jewish detainees and deportees in concentration camps and ghettos. The ICRC despatched from Switzerland 72,200 food parcels and 4,440 parcels of pharmaceutical products on behalf of the three most important Jewish welfare organizations, in particular the American Joint Distribution Committee in New York¹. From December 1944 to May 1945, this organization's representative in Switzerland paid in 333,000 Swiss francs, allowing 33,326 food parcels to be sent to some twenty camps, mainly to Landsberg-am-Lech, Bergen-Belsen and Terezin (Theresienstadt).

From the armistice and until the autumn of 1945, the ICRC also sent by road convoy about 1,800 tons of supplies to Dachau, Munich, Mauthausen, Linz, Innsbruck, Lübeck, Bayreuth, Salzburg, Leipzig, Prague, Pilsen and other camps where former detainees and deportees were still to be found.

¹ See below p. 516.

(2). — *Internal Organization — Special Relief Division*

From 1942 onwards, the Individual Relief Service at Geneva forwarded parcels intended for civilian detainees and deportees by next of kin resident in countries at war with Germany. After protracted and laborious negotiations the Committee secured the German authorities' consent to yet larger shipments of individual and collective parcels. Relief work for German concentration camps and prisons grew to such proportions and became so intricate that a separate department had to be opened.

This department became, early in 1944, the *Special Relief Division*, which dealt with relief to civilian detainees and deportees in prisons, concentration camps, labour detachments and ghettos converted into closed camps, in Germany and in the occupied territories. Later, this Division absorbed the Concentration Camp Parcels Service (formerly part of the Relief Division) and the Civilian Workers Service set up in the autumn of 1944. The Special Relief Division dealt both with the detained and deported civilians (including refugees, internees and civilian workers who had no legal protection), and with Jews who were under arrest or the subject of persecution. The Division's main purpose was to give the most effective material relief possible to certain categories of war victims, while observing as far as possible the wishes of the donors. The Special Relief Division was the counterpart of the Relief Division¹ which dealt exclusively with relief to PW and civilian internees who were classed with prisoners of war, and who alone had a definite legal status recognised under treaty law.

The practical details of these relief shipments were usually handled by the Joint Relief Commission²; this body purchased and despatched supplies according to instructions from the Special Division, which met the costs. The ICRC negotiated with the Allied blockade authorities, the donor organizations, and the Detaining Powers. By this co-ordination of inter-

¹ See above p. 276.

² See below p. 363.

national relief activities, the Joint Relief Commission became the Committee's executive agent for the despatch of supplies to many categories of detainees in enemy states ; these activities thus fell within the scope of the Committee's humanitarian tasks. Acting on the Committee's behalf, the Joint Relief Commission dealt with the transit, despatch, warehousing and sorting of the extensive bulk supplies sent to Geneva.

The organization of the relief shipments was the sole responsibility of the first section of the Special Relief Division, i.e. the Concentration Camp Parcels Section (called the " CCC " = *Colis pour camps de concentration*). This Service was started in 1943 and grew to considerable proportions. Its books were kept separate, an account being opened for each donor who wished to send parcels to civilian detainees or deportees. The work became steadily more intricate, as donors sent their parcels at irregular intervals and consignment cost varied, according to the contents of each parcel. Separate estimates had to be made and submitted to the chief donors—i.e. the Governments, Red Cross Societies and private relief organizations. Over a thousand accounts for individual gifts and collective donations were opened. Balance sheets were issued monthly ; regular statistics were kept, to allow an estimate of daily shipments and fair distribution by nationalities and camps. The Accountant's Section was in daily contact with the Joint Relief Commission with regard to all questions concerning the orders for parcels placed by the CCC Section.

The latter also comprised a secretariat for the correspondence with donors, who frequently asked for changes in the standard parcels made up by the Joint Relief Commission. All parcels, both individual and collective, despatched by the CCC Section contained acknowledgement forms for signature by the recipients. As in all departments of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, the Section had a card-index, where the names of detainees and deportees were recorded when the signed receipts reached Geneva. The receipts were numbered and dated, and handed to the Business Machines Section, which made out perforated cards showing the cost of the parcels, the number despatched, the number of receipts and other details.

The acknowledgments provided invaluable evidence. When a detainee was released or transferred to another camp, his parcel was sent on by the German post office. The receipts therefore showed new addresses, and by this means other concentration camps were often discovered.

The second section of the Special Relief Division known as the " Civilian Workers Section " was set up when the despatch of relief supplies to workers ¹ was facilitated through concessions made by the German authorities. These concessions permitted the supervision by the ICRC of supplies issued to alien workers deported into Germany during the last period of the war.

Furthermore, a large number of next of kin parcels for civilian workers had been forwarded from France to Geneva, and were checked by the CCC Section. Difficulties in rail transport towards the end of hostilities unfortunately precluded any such large-scale relief scheme, and by agreement with the French Government 43 wagonloads of foodstuffs and pharmaceutical products sent to Geneva were returned to France during the summer of 1945.

¹ Despatches of this nature were debarred from 1940 to 1943 owing to the rules imposed by the Blockade Authorities.

Chapter 7

Special Cases

§ I. RELIEF TO WAR-DISABLED AFTER THE ARMISTICE ¹

General Remarks

For some time past, individual and collective appeals received in Geneva, reports from the Committee's delegates and other information had made it clear that the war-disabled would, in some countries, constitute a difficult problem after the war. The Committee's work in Greece in 1941, for instance, has exemplified the valuable assistance that could be given by a neutral organization to the war-disabled of an occupied country ².

Although relief to war-disabled was the concern of the national authorities, it became evident that outside help would be required in the countries which had particularly suffered during the war. In some countries the pensions granted to the disabled did not cover their most essential needs; furthermore, as civilian war-victims were not by rights entitled to compensation, neither displaced persons nor refugees were eligible. However, national and international associations could not assume the responsibility of the competent government authorities for adequate compensation; only gifts in kind could be considered.

¹ By reason of the circumstances that attend total warfare, the notion of war-disablement has been extended to other disabled besides members of the forces.

² See below, pp. 451 et seq.

Relief Action

The Committee's activities were based on two criteria : the category of the beneficiaries, and the nature of the relief. These, however, were not as simple as they may appear. In practice, each action had to be examined separately.

The *category of the beneficiaries* depended not only on their nationality, but also on their status and the nature of their disablement.

The disabled, either singly or in groups, were of varying status ; they included prisoners of war, repatriates, ex-prisoners of war (either at home, or in a convalescence or rehabilitation centres), demobilised army personnel, civilians, displaced or stateless persons, evacuees (for instance Sudeten Germans), *émigrés* (such as Spanish Republicans), and political dissidents who received relief neither from their country of origin, nor in their place of residence.

Disabilities fell into the following classes :

- (1) — Amputees and paralytics.
- (2) — Blind and deaf.
- (3) — Facial disfigurement ; nervous and mental cases ; loss of memory.
- (4) — Tubercular cases (bone and pulmonary).
- (5) — Heart cases ; chronic diseases.

The most important distinction was that of nationality. The Committee have no funds for the use of the disabled in general and must draw whatever sums are required from funds restricted to definite categories of persons. Most of the funds used by the ICRC for the disabled are in fact earmarked, consisting of balances remaining after the armistice from sums reserved for prisoners of certain nationalities, from the collections made amongst German and Austrian PW, or from certain donations.

The *nature of the relief* depends upon the kind of disability and the needs of the area where the disabled reside. Relief supplies include the following :

- (a) — Artificial limbs, or raw material for their manufacture.
- (b) — Special appliances (crutches, Braille watches, aids for the deaf, orthopaedic or surgical apparatus).
- (c) — Furniture and bedding for convalescent or rehabilitation centres.
- (d) — Foodstuffs and clothing.
- (e) — Medicaments and restoratives.

Prisoners of war

It has been seen ¹ that the ICRC provided artificial limbs, surgical apparatus, special appliances for amputated and blind PW during the war. After the armistice, the Committee continued its work for German disabled PW, particularly in France. Individual cases were reported by its delegates after camp visits.

A collective scheme was organized for German PW amputees, at the Rimini-Miramare Camp in Italy. Artificial legs drawn from the stocks in Geneva were fitted in the camp; these had not been made to measure and were suitable as provisional appliances. Funds at the disposal of the Committee's Washington delegation were used to supply this camp with artificial arms made in America.

Crutches were also issued to amputees in a demobilisation centre in Southern Germany. Repatriates who lacked even these appliances, had to drag themselves along on their stumps, or be carried by their comrades to the departure station. The Committee obtained crutches through an appeal to the Austrian Red Cross and to Swiss makers.

Demobilised army personnel and civilians

As soon as hostilities ceased, the ICRC turned to the question of relief for the disabled in countries which had suffered

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 265-266, and above pp. 318 et seq.

most during the war, and for displaced persons of all nationalities in Germany, Austria, Italy and East European countries. Conditions were such that many months elapsed before details sufficient for a study of the problem and for the organization of relief action could be gathered. To supplement the information given by its delegations and by national relief committees, the ICRC several times sent a medical specialist to Germany to ascertain the most urgent needs. A concerted programme, requiring long preparation in view of the manifold difficulties, was drawn up for German and Austrian disabled. This work was financed with part of the proceeds from the collections amongst German and Austrian PW in the United States. A sum of 200,000 Swiss francs was allocated for the above purpose.

In the French Zone of Germany the production of artificial limbs was seriously hampered by the requisitioning of raw materials, such as wood, leather and metal, and by the lack of components, e.g. screws, bolts, belting, straps, hooks and so on. The ICRC was able to help the amputees by inducing the occupation authorities to release the required material, and by supplying essential parts to the workshops through the regional relief committees, under the supervision of the delegation in Baden-Baden.

Aid for the disabled in the British Zone consisted chiefly in the opening of a vocational training centre. Five workshops were set up in Bad-Pyrmont ; in each of these ten men were trained as watchmakers, tailors, cobblers, carpenters and draughtsmen. This scheme was carried out in collaboration with the British Red Cross, which undertook to find the necessary instructors in Great Britain.

In Austria, joint assistance was given to the amputees and the blind by the ICRC, the Swiss Relief Fund (*Don Suisse*) and the Swiss Red Cross. The blind were furnished with Braille watches and equipment for vocational training (e.g. typewriters, material for the making of baskets, brushes and netting). Some raw material for the manufacture of artificial limbs was also provided.

Smaller schemes were intended for the disabled in Finland (medicaments sent direct from the U.S.A.), Italy (similar

consignments sent direct to the National Office for War-Disabled), France (clothing and carpenters' tools sent to a TB sanatorium in Upper Savoy), Java (two artificial legs made in Geneva), Rumania (surgical appliances for paralytics), and so on.

Displaced Persons

Relief work for disabled Displaced Persons is an extremely delicate matter and requires careful planning. Thus, it took the ICRC eighteen months constant efforts to secure appliances for 35 amputees in Italy. In February 1946, the Naples delegation had found the money for supplying these men with artificial limbs, which were ready for despatch in April 1947. Meanwhile, the amputees had been moved from Italy to the British Zone in Germany, and had been dispersed. The Committee's delegate in that zone first had to discover their whereabouts, and ensure their transfer to the same hospital. Thereafter, he had to secure competent medical advice and expert workmen, before the limbs could be fitted.

In another instance, a party of Polish amputees in the French Zone of Germany were given artificial limbs made in Geneva and fitted under the supervision of the delegate, the costs being met by a Polish committee. Two parties of disabled Spanish Republicans, one in North Africa, the other in the South of France, were twice given relief in the shape of clothing, foodstuffs, restoratives and medicines. Supplies were also sent to assist Latvian disabled in various parts of Belgium and Germany; the costs were met with funds subscribed for that purpose.

The ICRC sometimes received gifts in kind for distribution as it though fit. Thus, a gift of several thousand pairs of crutches from the Australian Red Cross was shared out by the Joint Relief Commission and the ICRC among civilian and military disabled in the countries that had suffered most severely during the war. In some instances, the Committee worked in conjunction with both the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss Relief Fund, or with one of these organizations, without abandoning its own autonomy.

The experience of the ICRC has testified to the distress in which the disabled in a defeated country find themselves. In this connection, a useful comparison can be made between Greece in 1941 and Germany in 1945. From May 1945 onwards, the German disabled, whether military or civilian, found themselves resourceless. There were too few hospitals; compensation was quite uncertain; material for the manufacture of artificial limbs, surgical appliances, food, clothing, medicines and restoratives were all lacking. Having regard to the men's needs and the regulations issued by the occupation authorities, the ICRC felt obliged to take independent action and to start relief schemes along customary lines, despite the absence of any explicit mandate to that effect.

§ 2. RELIEF TO WAR-DISABLED AND CONSUMPTIVES IN GREECE

The situation of the many disabled ex-servicemen in various parts of Greece raised a difficult problem from the very outset of the German and Italian occupation. This category of sick and wounded were in particular need of help, but communications having broken down throughout the country, it was no easy matter to secure information about them.

According to data available in Geneva in the late summer of 1941, about 5,000 seriously wounded Greek soldiers were either in hospital at Athens, or had been discharged shortly before. Although all war-disabled were entitled to compensation, very many of them were in acute poverty, or were even homeless. The Athens district alone counted 1,800 war-disabled and 1,000 consumptive ex-servicemen who were not in hospital. Early in March 1943, the Greek Red Cross informed the Committee that their registers showed, for the whole of the country, 20,000 war-disabled, including 4,500 consumptives.

(1). — *Negotiations and despatch of relief supplies*

The ICRC planned, in agreement with the Greek Red Cross and the occupation authorities, to send food, medicines

and clothing to their delegation at Athens for distribution to the Greek military disabled. It was then discovered that only a fraction of the necessary supplies were available in Europe. Geneva thereupon advised the donors of the position and asked the Allies, in August 1941, to grant these disabled the same facilities as for PW, with special reference to navicerts. At the end of August 1941, the ICRC received broad permission to give Greek disabled in hospital a share in the collective overseas consignments and the same advantages as Allied PW. The Committee was held responsible for distribution and had to provide donors with monthly statements on the number of men treated in hospital, and the issues made. This authority was confirmed in December 1941, and navicerts in respect of parcels intended for Greek disabled in hospital were granted from March 1942 onwards.

Geneva was thus in a position to give useful assistance to the Greek disabled, even when hostilities had ceased, in the period up to the end of September 1945. Before the overseas supplies reached Athens, the delegation was able to give the recipients part of the supplies purchased by the Turkish Red Crescent for the account of Greek donors and shipped from Turkey to the Piraeus, between October 1941 and August 1942, by the steamers *Kurtulus* and *Dumlupinar*¹.

Application for relief supplies was also made also to the British, Canadian and American Red Cross Societies, who authorised the ICRC to hand out to Greek disabled in hospital, during the summer of 1942, a first issue of 10,500 standard food parcels, partly given by the Greek War Relief in Washington, and drawn from shipments unloaded at Lisbon. At the end of August 1942, the Athens delegation received the first two wagonloads of food parcels; others followed in November and December, but transport overland from Geneva soon encountered great difficulties. The ICRC then obtained authority for overseas supplies for the disabled to be conveyed by the Swedish vessels which, from September 1942 onwards, were on

¹ See below, p. 452.

shuttle service between Canada and the Piraeus, to carry wheat to the Greek civil population ¹.

The Committee sought permission from the Allied authorities to extend their aid to the disabled who had not been admitted to hospital for want of accommodation. Early in 1942, the Committee was able to help a limited number of men belonging to this category, and after further applications, was in April 1943, temporarily allowed to make distributions as it wished. The number of parcels intended for disabled not in hospital was later reduced on several occasions, and this led the ICRC to take the matter up in London, in June 1943.

In February 1943, the Italian authorities consented to the Committee's issuing Allied uniforms to Greek disabled, on condition that all military badges were removed ; the German authorities would not however agree, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

A further scheme for the hospitalization in Switzerland of a number of consumptive Greek disabled was approved by the German authorities, but had to be given up, owing to insuperable transport difficulties.

After the spring of 1943, supplies from Europe ceased, and the Athens delegation could only count on direct shipments for Greek disabled from the United States and Canada. A monthly average of 20,000 parcels was thus conveyed by Swedish vessels. In all, the delegation received some 300,000 standard five kilo parcels, despatched by the American and Canadian Red Cross, on behalf of the Greek War Relief and the Greek Red Cross in London. Further consignments were received from the Argentine Red Cross.

The donors continued to specify, however, that these parcels should go only to the disabled in hospital. Furthermore, the American authorities held that disabled not in hospital should be regarded as civilians, and thus be entitled solely to the overseas relief distributed to the population by the Managing Commission. The separate service for the disabled set up by that Commission could however not meet all their needs. This

¹ See below, pp. 472 et seq.

ruling, based on a theoretical view of the case, was most unfair in practice, since the disabled in hospital, who were a minority, alone received special relief, of which they really stood less in need than the others. The disabled who were left without assistance, supported by the Greek Red Cross, objected to the ruling ; on the other hand, the delegates discovered that hospitalization did not facilitate the task of checking issues and that it was by no means easy to prevent misuse by the recipients themselves. Early in December 1943, the ICRC submitted a detailed report on the subject to the donors, showing that the safeguards at its delegation's disposal were the same, whether the disabled concerned were in hospital or not. At the end of January 1944, the Allied authorities, while maintaining the limit of 20,000 parcels, gave the ICRC general authority to extend the distribution on its own responsibility, to disabled who were not in hospital.

In early March 1944, the Committee's delegation endeavoured to set up a medical service for disabled who were not in hospital. The Greek Red Cross, acting in agreement with Geneva, asked that no new medical examinations should be made and that decisions should be based on the medical certificates issued by the military authorities. They also urged that the parcels which were accumulating in warehouses and were liable to spoil, should be distributed to all disabled, including those of previous conflicts.

After further negotiations, the delegation was definitely authorised, at the end of June 1944, to distribute relief to the following categories :

- (1) — Disabled in hospital.
- (2) — Disabled not in hospital through lack of room, but attended regularly in their homes by special medical officers.
- (3) — Disabled certified as consumptive, not in hospital, and not visited in their homes by a medical officer.
- (4) — Disabled not in hospital and not consumptive, but with more than 50% incapacity.

The Allied blockade authorities consented to the Committee's scheme, on condition that the supplies were issued according to the instructions and on the responsibility of the Athens delegation.

(2). — *Medical premises and equipment*

In view of the distressing circumstances of the disabled not in hospital, and in particular of T.B. cases, the ICRC made strenuous attempts, in the winter of 1941, to ensure their proper medical treatment and admission to hospital, or at least, to temporary quarters. These efforts met with such constant and in most cases insuperable difficulties that very poor results were obtained.

The seven hospitals and the ten wards in civilian sanatoria reserved for disabled at that time were wholly inadequate, and the ICRC at first planned to send prefabricated hutments from Switzerland for the accommodation of the T.B. cases. The Italian Government had given formal assurances that these premises would not be requisitioned, on condition that they were under the sole responsibility of the Committee's delegation and erected with local labour under the supervision of the military occupation authorities. The ICRC applied for funds to various Allied and neutral Red Cross Societies. Before the difficult problem of transport was solved, the Greek Red Cross announced that it had found premises, namely, the sanatorium owned by the Dionysos Society at Papanicolos, and the Jeramoni and Petras sanatoria. The Red Cross therefore advised Geneva to send, instead of hutments, the equipment required for these buildings. With the 100,000 Swiss francs subscribed for the purchase of huts, the ICRC bought hospital equipment and medicaments. A further appeal was made in February 1943 to the American, Canadian and British Red Cross, to the Turkish Red Crescent and to Greek residents in Egypt. As a result, large quantities of supplies, including mattresses, sheets, blankets, and surgical instruments were furnished by welfare organizations in London, the American Red Cross, Greek relief committees in the United States, and Greek residents in Egypt,

and were delivered in Athens. It then transpired that no further premises for the disabled could be secured.

A scheme sponsored by the Greek Red Cross in London for the accommodation of 400 men in a large hospital in Tripoli, had to be abandoned, as also other suggestions for the housing in military hospitals of 100 war-invalids, who had been released after four months imprisonment, and for using a wing of the former Military Hospital No. 3 for cases of T.B. A part of the stores was used to furnish the quarters set aside for the disabled ; the remainder was warehoused in the Piraeus by the delegation, in conformity with fresh instructions from the donors, who did not wish their gifts to be handed over to local organisations until the question of premises had been settled.

Most of these stores were unfortunately destroyed by air bombardment a few months later. The stores salvaged, among them 87 beds and 66 mattresses, were handed at the donors' request to the Greek Red Cross, after the liberation of the country in May 1945. The ICRC also presented this Society with two relief consignments : (1) in June 1945, 7,500 Allied military garments, the issue of which had been forbidden by the German ; (2) in September, 234 cases and bales of hospital stores and a few cases of clothing received from the British Red Cross, acting on behalf of the Greek Red Cross in London.

§ 3. RELIEF TO NURSES IN CAMPS

After the armistice the ICRC turned to the problem of the German nurses detained in PW camps in order to care for the wounded and sick.

During the summer of 1945, the Committee sent layettes and clothing on several occasions to German Red Cross nurses in German PW camps in France who were expecting babies.

In the autumn, clothing was collected among the Protestant and Catholic nurses' associations in Switzerland, on behalf of the eighty German Red Cross nurses who were attending seriously wounded German PW in the Hedwigenkoog Hospital, on the North Sea. Two hundred kilos were thus distributed by the delegation in the British Zone. This gift was followed, in

1946, by parcels of underclothing and knitting wool for the nurses of the Munsterlager, in the same zone.

New and worn underclothing, material and sewing requisites for making nurses' overalls were sent in 1947 to the German nurses with the SEP¹ Hospitals in Austria.

These gifts of wool and material enabled the ICRC to make the best use of the limited funds available, and gave the nurses occupation for their leisure time.

§ 4. RELIEF TO INTERNEES IN NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

The military personnel, PW and civilian refugees interned in neutral countries usually received relief from their legations or consulates. The ICRC took action only in particular circumstances. Thus, 125 cases containing about four tons of cigarettes from the American and British Red Cross were sent to Sweden for the Polish internees and the American airmen brought down in Swedish territory. These supplies, addressed to the Swedish Red Cross, and a consignment of 305 kilos of clothing for Latvian children, were exempt from carriage and customs charges.

Three German vessels, with a total crew of 98, took refuge at the outbreak of hostilities in Mormugao, the port of the Portuguese colony of Goa. As communications between this country and Germany were ordinarily very bad, and one-half of the supplies sent direct through the post by the German Red Cross were spoilt in transit, the Committee instructed the delegations in India to send these men gifts in cash and in kind.

For similar reasons, relief supplies of the German seamen interned in Saudi Arabia were despatched by the Committee's delegation in Egypt. However, this procedure was less convenient in the case of seven German seamen interned in the Yemen, after shipwreck. This country had no diplomatic relations with certain States; the ICRC was unable to obtain the necessary

¹ = Surrendered Enemy Personnel.

permits, and could only send a few parcels of medicaments through a resident in the Yemen.

A number of Polish military refugees who had fled to Hungary after the Polish Campaign in 1939 were helped by the Hungarian Red Cross with funds received from the Polish Government in London. After the occupation of Hungary by the Germans, these men were in danger of being deported to Germany. In agreement with the Hungarian authorities, the Committee's delegate supplied them with relief in money and in kind, and continued to do so until of the Battle of Budapest, when all communications between the internees and the delegate were cut.

Spain : Miranda de Ebro Camp

More extensive efforts were made in Spain where, on the outbreak of war, a large number of civilians and military personnel were interned in the Spanish camp of Miranda de Ebro. They comprised, besides stateless persons, nationals of 27 different countries : Austrians, Belgians, British, Dutch, Germans, Poles, Spaniards, and also some Jews. The majority were military personnel from France arrested by the military police. The ICRC delegate was authorised to visit the camp and was given sufficient supervisory powers to allow of the distribution of supplies from overseas. The demoralising conditions of this camp, which was already overcrowded before the extensive evacuations of 1943, can easily be imagined. In spite of the Spanish authorities' efforts to improve living conditions, the internees were short of clothing, particularly undergarments, and the food rations were inadequate.

The first direct appeals reached Geneva early in 1941, from stateless persons and Argentines who, together with Germans and Austrians, were dependent on their own resources. Recognizing the urgency of their case, the ICRC informed several welfare organizations of the difficult circumstances in which these internees were placed. In the autumn of 1941 the first consignment of medicaments was made by the Polish Red Cross, which requested the Committee to draw 200 food parcels from its stock of standard American parcels in Geneva. Early

in the following year, the British and American Red Cross decided to send relief to Allied internees in Miranda, and it was agreed that supplies should be drawn from the cargoes of vessels calling at Lisbon, and forwarded by the Committee's delegate; the Spanish Red Cross, the American Ambassador and the ICRC delegation would then jointly distribute the gifts in the camps. As the result of customs and transport difficulties, the following rules were found necessary.

(1) — At the suggestion of the Spanish Red Cross, it was decided that the supplies should be sent customs free to the Miranda Branch of that Society, which would attend to the forwarding and distribution in the camp.

(2) — Besides exemption from customs, freight charges on the Spanish Railways (in private ownership) would be reduced by one-half.

(3) — The Spanish authorities agreed to the Committee's delegate in Madrid visiting Miranda Camp, in order to verify the safe arrival and proper distribution of supplies.

This agreement enabled all consignments obtained by the Committee efforts to be distributed without difficulty.

The following is a schedule of the consignments made :

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1940 — | 1 case surgical instruments (60 kilos). |
| | 3 cases containing radiographic apparatus (106 kilos). |
| | 3 cases of pharmaceutical products (the balance of a gift from the German Government, sent to Geneva for the Spanish Red Cross). |
| | 1 parcel of surgical appliances (5 probangs). |
| 1941 — | Gifts for the Polish internees in Miranda : |
| | 3 bales of clothing, from the British Red Cross. |
| | 4 consignments of pharmaceutical products, from the Polish Legation, Berne. |
| 200 | A.R.C. standard parcels, drawn from the Polish stocks in Geneva. |
| 1942 — | 200 ditto. |
| | 1 case of secondhand French books, for Polish officers. |
| | 27 individual food parcels, from the Polish Relief Committee, Indian Orchard (Mass.). |
| | 21 A.R.C. standard food parcels, drawn from stocks in Geneva. |
| | 400 Canadian Red Cross food parcels. |

- 500 A.R.C. standard food parcels, drawn from Allied stocks in Geneva.
- 1,500 A.R.C. standard food parcels, from the Polish-American Council, Chicago.
- 400 Canadian Red Cross food parcels.
- 500 A.R.C. food parcels, drawn from Allied stocks in Geneva.
- 1943 — 500 A.R.C. standard food parcels, from the Polish Council, Chicago.
- 2 boxes of Sandoz vials and surgical instruments (request of the Spanish Red Cross to Geneva).
- 900 pounds sterling—private gift (The Spanish Red Cross requested the ICRC to remit these funds for the German internees).
- 1944 — 2,500 A.R.C. standard food parcels, drawn from Polish stocks.
- 1,000 A.R.C. standard food parcels for American military internees.

Switzerland

The problem of assistance, through the ICRC, to escaped PW or refugees interned in Switzerland, did not arise until after the Italian armistice in 1943. A very large number of British PW and internees succeeded in escaping from Italian camps and taking refuge in Switzerland. Italian soldiers and civilians followed suit. The majority of these refugees arrived completely destitute, after a hazardous and exhausting journey. Applications for help poured in to Geneva. The Swiss authorities and Red Cross, who up to then had provided for all refugees, could not meet all the requirements of over 70,000 internees. The greatest need was for clothing, blankets and footwear, all of which were severely rationed in Switzerland and could not be imported, owing to the quota system imposed by the economic blockade.

For the most urgent cases the ICRC suggested drawing on reserves in Switzerland intended for Allied PW in Germany. The donors were first consulted, and when both their approval and that of the blockade authorities has been obtained, the ICRC equipped the British and American escaped PW and 2,000 former PW and civilian internees of Allied countries, such as Greeks, Russians, and Jugoslavs, with a complete set

of clothing drawn from these stocks and comprising : 1 battle blouse, 1 pair of trousers, 1 greatcoat, 1 pullover, 2 shirts, 2 sets of underwear, 3 pairs of socks and 3 handkerchiefs. This issue proved inadequate, and the Committee again appealed to the American Red Cross, which then gave authority for the distribution of a further 5,400 sets. The A.R.C. acted as a shipping agent, and the goods were paid for by various donors, such as the Greek War Relief Association, the Committee for Aid to Russians, in New York, and the Yugoslav Relief Fund Association, in Chicago. The *Œuvre de secours aux ouvriers*, in Geneva, similarly supplied clothing and various necessities for Russian ex-PW. The British Red Cross provided the Polish internees with sets of clothing. The French were given uniforms and clothing drawn from the stocks made over to the ICRC by the French Red Cross. The Committee informed the authorities and the internees themselves that the uniforms had been intended for PW detained in Axis countries and had therefore been transported under a safe-conduct from both belligerents ; in no circumstances, therefore, could they be worn by ex-PW on their returning to their units or to a territory occupied by their forces. It was agreed that the uniforms should be surrendered by ex-PW on their leaving Switzerland and returned to the ICRC warehouses.

The Swiss authorities were of opinion that Red Cross food parcels were not required, as the internees' rations were equivalent to those of the Swiss forces, and often higher than those of the civilian population. The ICRC endorsed this view, and the parcels were found extremely useful as additional rations for PW in belligerent countries. An exception was made for Indian ex-PW, who were accustomed to have their own diet, and the British Red Cross provided them with the appropriate parcels. Food parcels were also sent to sick internees under treatment in Swiss sanatoria.

The responsible Swiss authorities issued the relief supplies, and the ICRC delegates, who could visit all internment camps in Swiss territory, had full supervisory powers.

The endeavours made by Geneva since 1943 to find supplies for a large number of Italian internees and refugees bore fruit

only after the armistice in Europe, when funds from the Argentine allowed of various purchases. Further, A.R.C. parcels were made available for Italian internees.

The ICRC was throughout able to meet the numerous individual requests for medicines made by this class of internees.

Finally, the Committee undertook, in conjunction with the Swiss Federal military authorities and the Swiss Red Cross, to provide dental treatment for all internees in Switzerland. The Swiss authorities, while particularly concerned about dental care, were not in a position to give better treatment to foreign military personnel than that prescribed for the Swiss Army. The ICRC then assumed responsibility for all fees not payable by the Swiss military authorities, and to this effect set aside a Denture Fund, with the co-operation of the National Red Cross Societies concerned. Steps had to be taken to ensure speedy and well-organized relief, as demands were becoming increasingly numerous. One such expedient was to transform a railway restaurant car into a dental surgery and workshop. Expenses were allocated, according to an exact schedule, to the Red Cross Societies, to some of the internees, to the Swiss Red Cross, the Swiss Army Medical Service and the ICRC.

This mobile dental surgery, which was in operation from December 18, 1944, to July 18, 1946, was attended by 3,034 internees in the space of seven months. Allowing for holidays and travelling time, an average of 25 to 30 patients a day was maintained. This experiment was most successful, since it proved the utility of travelling dental surgeries. Camps are thus saved the expense of permanent installations. Checking is simple and thorough, so that a very inexpensive system may be used. The dental car, which was taken over by the Swiss Relief Fund on behalf of the International Dental Relief scheme, was later slightly modified and sent to Poland, where it was used, in particular, for the treatment of the Warsaw child population.



PART IV

RELIEF TO CIVILIAN POPULATIONS

Chapter I

Extension of Relief Work to Refugees, and to the Women, Children, Aged and Sick of the Civilian Population

§ I. CREATION OF A SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS EXECUTIVE

Whereas the experiences of the First World War led to the revision and extension of the Conventions for the protection of wounded combatants and prisoners of war, there were still no international agreements, on the outbreak of the Second World War, for the protection of the civilian populations, if no account is taken of the few inadequate and obsolete clauses of the Regulations annexed to the IVth Hague Convention of 1907. A Draft Convention for the protection of civilians in enemy or enemy-occupied territory, which had been prepared by the ICRC, was approved by the XVth International Red Cross Conference at Tokyo in 1934, and placed on the agenda of a Diplomatic Conference to be held in 1940, but which could not be called on account of the war ¹.

The ICRC therefore had no treaty basis upon which to build up relief work for civilian populations. Nevertheless, it was resolved to make every effort to alleviate their distress, in accordance with the spirit of its own statutes.

¹ See Vol. I, p. 573.

This task has in any case been defined by several International Red Cross Conferences held between the two Wars. In 1921, the Xth Conference (Geneva) voted a recommendation that Governments should agree to provide for the partial relaxation of the economic blockade, in the interests of the sick and aged, and the children.

At the Conferences which followed (1925-1928), the ICRC was invited to study what concessions might be made for certain categories of the civilian population, should Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant (Sanctions) be implemented. An important resolution to this effect was adopted by the Brussels Conference (1930) ; it runs as follows :

“ The Conference,

Having approved the report laid before it by the First Commission on the subject of “ Article XVI of the Covenant and Alleviation of the Blockade ”.

I.

1. — Warmly thanks the International Committee of the Red Cross for the valuable report which it has presented on the questions dealt with in the Tenth Resolution of the XVIIth Conference and the Ninth Resolution of the XIIth Conference, the said report having greatly facilitated their work.

2. — Notes that it would be desirable to create a suitable agency, the function of which would be, as far as is possible, to spare from certain categories of persons, such as children and the aged and sick, the inevitable distress resulting from the application of Article XVI of the League of Nations Covenant, or of a war blockade to their State, in the resistance of which to such action they take no part.

II

3. — Notes that under the terms of the resolutions of the Second Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, relations shall be maintained for humanitarian purposes, should the economic weapon of the League of Nations be applied in conformity with Article VI of the Covenant of the League.

4. — Considers that the humanitarian relations in question should include assistance to certain categories of the population, by supplying them with medicaments, hospital stores, food and clothing.

5. — Invites the International Committee of the Red Cross to consult, where necessary, with the appropriate departments of the League of Nations on arrangements for possible alleviations in each particular case.

6. — Invites the International Committee to study the form which such alleviations might take, on the basis of the Danish-Swedish and the Bulgarian proposals referred to under the Ninth Resolution of the XIIIth Conference, reproduced in the annex.

III

7. — Feels that the principle of maintaining humanitarian relations should be extended to the case of blockades during "declared warfare", and that the principle of the proposal made in Resolution VI should therefore be adopted.

8. — Invites the National Red Cross Societies to draw their Governments' attention to the preceding Resolution, with a view to securing, if possible, their full or conditional adherence to the principle mentioned in the said Resolution and to the proposals mentioned in Resolution VI.

9. — Invites the International Committee, if need be, to place itself at the disposal of the parties concerned, including among others the belligerents and Protecting Power, with a view to implementing the said proposals."

Upon the outbreak of war in 1939, the ICRC, acting on the above Resolution and on its right and duty to take the lead, initiated various relief activities which will be described in Chapter 2.

At the same time, the League of Red Cross Societies moved its headquarters from Paris to Geneva. According to its statutes, revised in 1938, the League was also called upon (Art. 3, par. 3), to undertake relief work in co-operation with the National Societies. Although, in principle, intended for peace time, this co-operation was continued throughout the war — the more easily since the Secretariat of the League, which now had its offices in a neutral country, was able to remain in constant and direct touch with the National Societies.

Both being responsible for civilian relief, the ICRC and the League worked independently during the first weeks of the war, and then jointly as soon as the League settled in Geneva.

The Statutes adopted by the XIIIth International Red Cross Conference (The Hague, 1928) stipulated under Article 9 that :

“The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies shall cooperate in fields which are common to both organizations, in particular as regards the activities of relief associations in case of national or international disaster.”

In peace-time, this Article came into force whenever major disasters occurred, such as earthquakes, floods and epidemics. But it could also apply in the case of armed conflicts. The ICRC and the League in any case drew authority from it to prepare immediate co-operation between the two organizations ; they were encouraged to do so, moreover, by a cable from the Chairman of the American Red Cross.

At the end of May 1940, the first opportunity for joint action occurred. In their flight before the lightning advance of the German forces, millions of French, Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburg refugees were crowding the highways of France. The French Red Cross did what it could, but the task was overwhelming. It turned for help to the ICRC and the League, who decided to launch an appeal to all the National Red Cross Societies of the non-belligerent and neutral States. On May 29, 1940, these Societies were informed of the situation and of the most urgent needs ; they were asked at the same time to send gifts direct to the French Red Cross.

Some declined, stating that they already had to deal with refugees in their own country. Others made considerable gifts in money and in kind. Thus, the Yugoslav Red Cross sent 300,000 dinars to the French Red Cross, of which 50,000 were in money and the remainder in non-perishable foodstuffs ; the Greek Red Cross gave 50,000 francs, the proceeds of a collection ; the Turkish Red Crescent offered 500 tons of wheat, carriage free ; lastly, donations of 600 and 500 Egyptian pounds were handed to the Ministers of France and Belgium in Egypt, as gifts from the Egyptian Red Crescent. The Red Cross Societies in Latin America planned to help the women and children, through the ICRC.

In addition to the problem of civilian refugees, another still more urgent matter arose, which was more in conformity with the traditional work of the ICRC. A large number of French combatants had been surrounded in the Belfort area and taken prisoner by the German forces. Food supplies could reach them only from Switzerland. The ICRC was informed of this situation by the German authorities, who despatched a delegate to Geneva to discuss the situation, and the Committee at once took steps to help these prisoners.

During the summer of 1940, the ICRC was again urged to help the refugees in France, particularly the women and children; it sent several trainloads of condensed and powdered milk to Paris.

The ICRC and the League soon realized, however, that such intermittent and limited endeavours were in no way commensurate with needs, and that constant appeals would soon exhaust the goodwill of donors. As the representative of the ICRC stated at the joint meeting held on October 28, 1940, the only practical solution was to set up a special relief agency for civilian victims of the war. It was at this meeting that the name "Joint Relief Commission" was mentioned for the first time.

In November 1940, this Commission issued an appeal, on behalf to the ICRC and the League, to all Governments and Red Cross Societies capable of giving aid. The appeal asked for donations in kind and in money, and for export and warehousing facilities. In particular, it asked the Latin American countries to make available either funds or medicaments, the latter being allowed to pass through the British blockade without difficulty. The donors were free to name the country or category of persons who were to benefit; they were, however, advised to assist preferably in building up large stocks, which were essential if immediate action was to be taken in urgent cases.

Owing partly to the general political and economic situation, the success of this appeal was unfortunately less than that issued in May 1940 for the refugees in France and Belgium. Most of the replies were evasive, and the total contributions of the American, Danish, Ecuador and Japanese Red Cross Societies, and of the Danish and Mexican Governments, together

amounted only to 120,000 francs. The Turkish Red Crescent made a gift in kind, and some Governments stated their readiness to facilitate the export of certain products. Despite these somewhat disappointing results, the appeal of November 1940 enabled the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross to step forward as a legally constituted agency — a fact which was to be of great consequence.

The newly-created Commission derived from the ICRC and the League certain noteworthy facilities. In addition to its expert secretariat, whose task had been greatly reduced by the war, the League was particularly well placed to procure relief supplies, through its close connection with many National Red Cross Societies. Moreover, the Chairman of the League was likewise Chairman of the American Red Cross; in this latter capacity he had displayed great interest, before the United States entered the war, in relief work for the occupied countries of Europe. At his suggestion a sum of 70 million dollars (50 million granted by the United States Government and 20 million collected by the American Red Cross) had been set aside for this purpose.

On the other hand, owing to the nature of its membership, the League alone was unable to undertake relief work for civilian populations in countries at war, since several of its leading members belonged to countries that were at war with the Axis. By the summer of 1940, it was clear that the German Government would not sanction any action by the League in the territories occupied by the Axis.

On the other hand, the ICRC was almost universally recognized; it could act in most of the countries at war, with the full approval of the authorities. This was its main asset. The belligerents had absolute confidence in its impartiality, and this confidence was largely due to the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland, the country where its headquarters are situated and its members recruited. In addition, it was obvious that, in accordance with the traditional principles that guide the Committee's work, the relief programmes undertaken under its auspices would serve no political ends, but would retain a strictly humanitarian character.

The ICRC, moreover, enjoyed numerous practical advantages. In many countries, it was represented with Governments and Red Cross Societies by duly accredited delegates who were able to appeal for donations, secure export permits, find means of transport, and receive and issue relief supplies. Through the reports made out by these delegates, the donors were exactly and impartially informed as to the result of the undertakings to which they had contributed.

Subsequently, it has often been maintained that the ICRC should have made itself solely responsible for giving relief to war victims. It was only after careful consideration that the ICRC abandoned this idea, since its limited resources would not have borne the costs of such a scheme. As the League was in a similar position, the two organizations were naturally led to join forces in an undertaking which they would have been unable to accomplish separately.

It was expected that the Joint Relief Commission, as such, would have to carry out large-scale financial operations in which neither the ICRC, nor the League would be committed. It had therefore to be endowed with an independent legal status, and was set up in conformity with Articles 60 seq. of the Swiss Civil Code, as a non-profit-making association, of which the ICRC and the League were members. This association was entered in the Commercial Register ; its statutes were adopted on July 23, 1941.

The General Assembly, the legislative body of the association, included one representative of the ICRC and one of the League. It set up a Council to direct the work of the Joint Commission, appointing two representatives of the ICRC, two of the League, and one member chosen outside these two institutions. The membership of the Council was increased to seven in October, 1943.

In the minds of its founders, the Joint Relief Commission was intended merely to further the joint action of the ICRC and the League, without in any way setting up a new and permanent International Red Cross body, since decisions of this kind are the prerogative of the International Red Cross Conference. This temporary agency did not, moreover, have a monopoly of the

relief work undertaken by the ICRC and the League for civilian populations. The ICRC, it will be recalled, first carried out its work in Greece unaided, later with the assistance of the Swedish Government ¹.

To meet the initial overhead costs of the Joint Relief Commission, the ICRC and the League each advanced 1,000 dollars. Later, the Commission was able to cover its own expenses for premises, staff, checking and issue of supplies, convoy agents, etc., by means of a levy of 2% on the value of the goods forwarded. The cost of transport, warehousing and insurance were generally borne by the donors, and sometimes by the beneficiaries. Such was the method finally adopted, in preference to subsidies from Governments and National Red Cross Societies, as was originally suggested.

§ 2. GENERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BELLIGERENTS

The relief schemes carried out by the Joint Relief Commission between 1941 and the end of 1946, when it was wound up, are too many for enumeration here. The Final Report of that Commission (comprising the joint report by the League and the ICRC to the International Red Cross Conference) gives many particulars on the subject. The present statement will therefore be confined to the Committee's assistance to the work of the Joint Relief Commission in the belligerent countries.

Before giving legal status to the Joint Commission, it was essential to know how the belligerents would greet its work for civilian populations in the occupied countries. M. C.J. Burckhardt, member of the ICRC and promoter of the joint activities, conducted the principal diplomatic negotiations and took upon himself the work of liaison between the Joint Relief Commission and the belligerents.

Germany was first consulted, as the relief operations had to begin in territories that were occupied by her forces. In the summer of 1940, during a mission to Berlin, the future Chairman

¹ See below pp. 450-479.

of the Joint Relief Commission succeeded in convincing the German civil and military authorities that the proposed work was indispensable and offered every pledge of goodwill. The German Red Cross also promised their full support.

After the appeal of November 1940, the ICRC and the League officially asked the German Government to authorize the shipment of food supplies, clothing and medicaments for women and children in the occupied countries. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Reich replied on January 11, 1941, by a letter of primary importance, which laid down the following rules :

(1) — The German Government agreed to the principle of relief shipments in kind and in funds to the war-stricken populations in the territories occupied by the German forces.

(2) — The shipments were to be by collective consignments, and not by isolated gifts for specific persons.

(3) — The German Red Cross would have to organize and control the issue of gifts.

(4) — Relief consignments would be duty and carriage-free, provided they were addressed to the German Red Cross.

(5) — Distribution would be carried out by the local welfare agencies and in accordance with the wishes of the donors.

(6) — No requisitions would be made at any time for the benefit of the German forces or officials.

(7) — On application in each instance, representatives of the donors would be allowed to enter the occupied territories to satisfy themselves that the relief supplies had been carefully and equitably distributed.

Of these clauses, the sixth was of especial importance, as it was an essential condition of any relief work for civilian populations in territories occupied by the German Army.

Economic Warfare.

The second World War at once assumed the character of total warfare, since the States engaged did not count only on

the force of arms to defeat the enemy. In particular, they had planned beforehand the means to strike at his economic power, and contrary to what happened in 1914-1918, the plans were put into operation forthwith. As soon as war broke out, trading with enemy, or enemy-occupied countries was prohibited; it was strictly regulated with neutral countries; many commodities were classed as war contraband and were liable to confiscation by the belligerents.

According to the Governments concerned, this policy, even if it did temporarily harm private interests, was justified by the necessity for the earliest conclusion of the war and of the suffering it inflicted on the entire world. There was, however, no doubt that it affected neutrals as well as the enemy, and the civilian population as well as the combatants; it was thus difficult to reconcile with the humanitarian principles to which civilized nations should conform in waging war. In particular, the belligerents were averse to the dispatch of relief supplies, because they wished at all costs to deprive the adversary of any element which could give him the slightest assistance in his war effort¹. The ICRC, which is by principle and tradition bound to assist all war victims, was therefore confronted by very serious and sometimes insurmountable difficulties.

(A). *The Blockade*

Relief work was seriously hampered by the strict blockade which the Allies imposed upon the European continent as soon as war was declared, with the intention of economically isolating the Axis countries. The ICRC had thus no access to the great overseas markets, and even in the neutral countries of Europe, for reasons which will be given later, it could not freely purchase the necessary supplies.

To cover their requirements, the neutral States signed agreements with the Allies known as " War Trade Agreements " or " Blockade Agreements ", which cut their exports both to other neutral countries and to belligerent States. The agreement

¹ See p. 28.

of April 25, 1940, for instance, subjected the foreign trade of Switzerland to very severe regulations.

To ensure the application of these agreements and of those of a similar kind which she had been compelled to sign with the Axis Powers owing to the counter-blockade¹, Switzerland herself controlled all her imports and exports. Upon their arrival in Swiss territory, all goods which the Allies had permitted her to import for her own requirements were taken over by a Swiss commercial control body, whose duty it was to prevent their being diverted from their ostensible purpose.

By virtue of the Blockade Agreement, Switzerland also agreed to the creation of a "Standing Joint Commission"², comprising delegates of the Swiss and Allied Governments. This Commission, with headquarters in Berne, dealt with all the problems raised by the application of the Agreement. It regularly received from the Swiss Government the necessary statistical information and documents, and all particulars which it deemed appropriate. Difficulties it could not solve itself were submitted, through its delegates, to the Governments concerned. The Allied delegates received their instructions direct from the blockade authorities; these were the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London, the *Ministère du blocus* in Paris, and, after the United States entered the war, the Board of Economic Warfare in Washington. An Interallied Blockade Commission, accredited to the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London, coordinated the work of these Ministries and the economic warfare of the Allies. The Commission also authorized the passage of neutral goods through the blockade. After the occupation of France and the entry into the war of the United States, it became the Joint American-British Blockade Committee.

While fairly moderate at the outbreak of the war, the rules imposed by the blockade on neutral countries became steadily more stringent, as a result of reprisals against enemy trade. The blockade authorities made exception, however, for certain relief schemes. This was the case with a project undertaken by

¹ See p. 377.

² Not to be confused with the Joint Relief Commission itself.

an American organization in occupied Poland. Likewise, through the efforts of the ICRC in London, several large food consignments from Latin America, addressed to Poland and even Germany, were allowed through the blockade, for distribution by the German Red Cross to the wounded and sick.

The Allied regulations tightened, however, after the occupation of the greater part of Europe and the western seaboard by the Axis forces. On July 31, 1940, Great Britain instituted a new control procedure for ships and cargoes, known as the "navicert" system. Inspection was carried out in the ports of loading—consequently before the shipment of the goods—and no longer in the Allied control ports in Europe. Through the British or Allied diplomatic representatives in neutral countries, the blockade authorities in London received applications for transit; when these were granted, they issued the papers known as "navicerts". Goods and ships not covered by navicerts ran the risk of seizure by the sea patrols and other Allied control bodies. In addition, ships wishing to take advantage of certain facilities in Allied ports of call, such as repairs, refuelling, provisions and so on, had to secure a ship's warrant, in exchange for an undertaking not to convey goods other than those covered by a navicert, nor to render any service whatever to the enemy.

The strictness of these stipulations took no account of humanitarian considerations. Henceforth, any supplies sent to enemy territory were exposed to seizure, even if intended for the wounded and sick. Aware of the grave harm thus caused to war-victims, the ICRC at once began negotiations with the blockade authorities and sent one of its members to London to plead its cause with the Ministry of Economic Warfare.

Discussions first turned on relief for prisoners of war. The Ministry agreed to individual parcels, which were expressly provided for under Articles 37 and 38 of the Geneva Convention. The matter of bulk consignments, without which the prisoners in German hands would not have had the extra food rations that were indispensable, was the subject of protracted discussions; such consignments were authorised only after the ICRC has supplied proof that it was able to check the issue of these

supplies to Allied war prisoners and civilian internees. It was still more difficult to obtain approval for bulk consignments of overseas supplies for French prisoners ; the Allies gave their consent finally in 1942, and then only for a limited tonnage ¹.

The Committee's mission to London thereupon broached the very complex problem of assistance to civilian populations in countries occupied by the Axis forces. They recalled the experience of the war of 1914-1918, during which the Belgian population had been supplied, despite the blockade, through an American committee which had organized the supervision of relief distribution on the spot. They also invoked several Resolutions adopted at International Red Cross Conferences between 1920 and 1938. According to these Resolutions, the ICRC was to consider the part to be played by the Red Cross in the event of economic blockade, and to consider how blockade regulations might be relaxed in the interests of specific categories of the population in the countries concerned, and of the release of certain supplies, such as medicaments and hospital equipment. This enquiry was to form the basis of a possible international convention on the subject ².

First Period (August 1940—End of 1943).

The ICRC was unfortunately unable to secure permission to send relief from overseas to certain categories of war-victims in the blockade countries. In a letter dated September 14, 1940, the Ministry of Economic Warfare stated that, while fully appreciating the value of the Committee's humanitarian work, the British Government were compelled to refuse to modify in any way the blockade policy defined by the Prime Minister in his speech of August 22, 1940. In their opinion, the shipment of relief to occupied countries indirectly assisted the enemy, who could devote part of the local production to the requirements of the German population, and even to the manufacture of war material (for instance, the manufacture of

¹ See pp. 30 et seq.

² See Resolution X, Geneva Conference, 1925 ; Resolution IX, Hague Conference, 1928.

explosives with fats, alcohol with potatoes, plastic material for aircraft with by-products of milk). It would, moreover, be impossible to ensure that the enemy did not seize these supplies for their own use. There was no reason to make an exception even for certain categories of persons (e.g. children and mothers), because the supply of food to the civilian population of an occupied country as a whole must be the responsibility of the occupying Power.

The British Government would countenance only the shipment of medicaments earmarked exclusively for wounded and sick in the occupied countries. These medicaments, again, were confined to pharmaceutical products, in the true sense, and dressings; they did not include foodstuffs not of a strictly medical nature, such as vitamins or cod-liver oil, nor blankets and hospital equipment, as the British Government considered that enough of these were on the European continent and should be furnished by the occupying Power.

In practice, medical stores were only given navicerts with difficulty, particularly those addressed to the civilian populations of Belgium and Yugoslavia; and the list of authorized products was frequently altered.

The economic blockade was accompanied by a financial blockade, the object of which was to deprive the enemy of the benefits of foreign currency. This became increasingly strict, especially after the United States entered the war, and also greatly hampered relief work.

Anxious, despite all these obstacles, to help women and children, the ICRC turned to the European markets for the food and clothing which the Allied blockade prevented them from procuring overseas. Unfortunately, the resources of the neutral states and of the Balkan countries, which were satellites of the Axis, were quickly exhausted, and it became more and more difficult to meet the applications that constantly came in. To remain inactive in face of the increasing distress in the devastated areas would have been a dereliction of duty. The ICRC once more tried to convince the blockade authorities that military necessities, however imperative, never completely freed a belligerent from its moral obligations, and that conse-

quently the Allies could not remain indifferent to the fate of millions of human beings who were suffering from starvation and epidemic disease. Similar steps were often undertaken at the express request of National Red Cross Societies and other relief organizations, whose representatives in London supported the endeavours of the ICRC to the fullest extent.

Undeterred by repeated refusals, the ICRC took up the matter once more, whenever a particularly critical situation arose. Its perseverance was at last rewarded ; at the request of one of its members, then in London, the blockade was relaxed to enable food supplies to be taken into Greece, where famine was making terrible inroads on the population ¹. But neither Belgium, nor Belgrade, nor any civilian population elsewhere was able to benefit by similar measures ; only when the European Continent was invaded by the Allies in 1944 were the regulations lifted for Holland and the Channel Islands.

Second Period (End of 1943—May 1945).

For the above reasons, purchases by the Joint Relief Commission had to be made in neutral countries, particularly in Switzerland.

As the war lengthened, supplies became increasingly scarce. Despite the generosity of the Government towards the Committee's relief schemes, Switzerland had to bear in mind her own precarious situation. The agreements by which she was bound to both parties, and which were constantly changing with the military, political and economic situation, greatly restricted her export possibilities. As a result of the victories gained in 1943 and 1944, the Allies increased their pressure on neutral countries, to bring them to sever their commercial relations with the Axis Powers, and Switzerland was placed between the blockade and the counter-blockade. A Swiss delegation was sent to London to negotiate with the Anglo-American delegation representing the blockade authorities. Under the provisional agreements of December 19, 1943, and of August 14, 1944, Switzerland

¹ See pp. 452 and 461.

procured navicerts for the indispensable overseas goods, but in exchange her Government had to agree to cut down her exports still further.

In London, the Swiss delegation advocated, first and foremost, the vital interests of their country ; but as the ICRC had its headquarters in Geneva, they agreed, at the Committee's request, likewise to plead the cause of the Red Cross. The ICRC was bound to carry out its work within the scope of the arrangements to which the Swiss authorities were committed by the Allies, and the quotas granted to the former were henceforth too small to deduct a part of them to serve as relief exports.

The Standing Joint Commission, mentioned earlier, could, it is true, grant additional quotas. All the relief schemes of the International Red Cross were therefore submitted to them. But they allowed only the shipment of supplies paid for with Swiss funds. The ICRC could not agree to a distinction between the origin of the funds used ; it was precisely through the use of foreign assets deposited in Switzerland that certain purchases could be made, against the account of welfare organizations in the occupied countries. In addition, when the Standing Joint Commission were unable to decide controversial cases themselves, they had to refer to the blockade authorities in London and Washington. Relief work was thus subjected to very regrettable delays, and its chances of success were correspondingly reduced.

The ICRC then entered into direct negotiations, in Geneva and Berne, with the Allied delegates of the Commission. It maintained that work of international and purely humanitarian character, such as it pursued, should not be subjected to the same restrictions as trade exchanges, and that the ICRC was entitled to special treatment. Its claims were supported by examples such as the following : the delegate of the ICRC in Belgrade had wired to Geneva that, unless the 20 tons of potatoes and 30 tons of millet intended for the school canteens recently opened in Belgrade, and for which an export permit had been in abeyance for a long time, did not leave at once, the entire relief scheme would have to be abandoned.

The Allied representatives were impressed by these arguments and promised to give a wider interpretation to the

blockade regulations. They allowed the Joint Relief Commission temporarily to continue its work for civilian populations in distress, whilst awaiting the response to the Memorandum sent by the ICRC to the Governments in London and Washington, on July 3, 1944, and dealing with the problem as a whole.

In this document, the ICRC had stressed the neutrality, impartiality and exclusively humanitarian purpose of its work ; it added its conviction that it would be able, by the effective control of distribution, to avoid any misappropriation of relief supplies which were intended for civilian populations. It concluded by asking that in the negotiations with the Swiss delegation then in progress in London the blockade authorities should consider granting the two following privileges to exports made from Switzerland by the Joint Relief Commission, for war-victims who took no part in the war effort of the Axis, i.e. women, children and the sick :

(1) — Such exports to be under a special régime and no longer considered as exports of the Swiss Government.

(2) — Such exports to receive permits by an emergency procedure, so that shipments should not be delayed.

Having examined the Memorandum during the summer of 1944, the blockade authorities recognized that the wishes of the ICRC were justified, and in large measure fell in with them.

Meanwhile, France had been the theatre of important military operations and events pointed to Germany being in a similar position in the near future. The ICRC therefore, as a neutral, impartial and world-wide agency, had to be ready to act not only in the occupied countries, but in the belligerent countries themselves. This increase in the scope of relief work led to further negotiations with the Allied representatives in Switzerland, who adopted a most conciliatory attitude.

On April 5, 1945, a final agreement was concluded in Switzerland between the ICRC and a delegation representing the American, British and French Governments. It dealt specifically with the following points :

(a) — Supplies imported by the International Red Cross to Switzerland under the Allied control system might be re-exported with the consent of the Allied representatives in Berne, to a destination other than that indicated on the navicerts;

(b) — Export of Swiss products by the International Red Cross was subject to approval by the Allied representatives in Berne, who would consider applications "in a spirit of complete understanding for the humanitarian objectives of the Red Cross", and would deal with them "in the least restrictive and most expeditious manner possible";

(c) — The British and United States Legations in Berne were granted extremely wide powers to authorize relief exports;

(d) — International Red Cross exports were not to be considered as part of the export quota of the Swiss Government. However, they were to be reduced, whenever the blockade authorities deemed it necessary;

(e) — Monthly statistics of exports by the International Red Cross were to be sent in by the Swiss Government to the British and United States authorities.

Relief shipments for Germany were the subject of a special arrangement. The export of supplies which had entered under a navicert was prohibited. Export of supplies of Swiss origin was permitted in behalf of the disabled, mothers and newly-born infants, expectant mothers, children and persons who were too old to contribute to the war effort of Germany, likewise victims of catastrophes such as epidemics, on condition that full reports of each distribution were made to the Allied Governments. The collapse of the German forces which took place soon after, and the occupation of the Reich by the four Allied Powers, made such shipments impossible.

The general agreement of April 5 enabled the Joint Relief Commission greatly to extend its activities, which had still further increased since it centralized applications for export permits and the shipments of all relief agencies in Switzerland. When in October 1944, it was decided not to subject Swiss exports to liberated France and Belgium to the control of the

Allied representatives in Berne, the blockade authorities greatly simplified the task of the ICRC. The Committee's delegates in these countries were now able to obtain direct from the local military authorities the import permits for relief supplies they considered necessary. In January 1945, this concession was extended to the liberated areas of the Netherlands and Alsace-Lorraine.

Third Period (Post-war period).

After the end of hostilities in Europe, the machinery of the blockade was maintained to enable the Allies to ensure a fair distribution of goods. The British Government, for instance, asked to be notified of all International Red Cross shipments and their destination ; they could thus deduct them from the total quota which was allocated to each country.

Through its almost exclusive monopoly in this sphere, the Ministry of Food in London was also able on very advantageous terms to procure from the Argentine the goods needed to supply Europe. The Ministry therefore proposed that International Red Cross purchases in that country should go through its hands, to preclude any rise in prices. A delegate of the ICRC, representing the Joint Relief Commission in London, was instructed to consider these questions, in agreement with the Allied authorities.

(B). The Counter-Blockade

The blockade was met by a counter-blockade, which also limited relief shipments to occupied countries. The Axis Powers, who attached as much importance as the Allies to economic warfare, by 1940 controlled the foreign trade both of the occupied and of the neutral countries of Europe. All exports from these countries had, consequently, to be accompanied by a *Geleitschein* or accompanying certificate. The same rule applied to the supplies which the ICRC wished to send to the civilian populations. The requisite *Geleitschein* was invariably obtained, but at the cost of delays which often held up the shipments.

Only relief for prisoners of war and civilian internees was free from all restrictions.

In addition, the agreements concluded between the Reich and Switzerland stipulated that Swiss exports should not exceed a certain volume. The ICRC asked that the supplies which it sent to occupied France for humanitarian purposes should not be included in the Swiss quota. In the summer of 1941, the German authorities gave a satisfactory answer as regards pharmaceutical products, but no exception was ever made in the case of foodstuffs and clothing.

Transfers of Funds.

The Trading with the Enemy Act of September 1939, under which Great Britain prohibited commerce with enemy countries, included monetary provisions. All transfers of funds from Great Britain to neutral countries required the authorization (license) of the Board of Trade, and this license was granted only for the payment of goods produced by the neutral countries in excess of their own requirements and which, in addition, did not contain more than 20% of raw material coming from Axis countries.

These provisions, and similar measures taken by the United States even before their coming into the war, were a serious handicap to the work of the Joint Relief Commission. As will be seen from the latter's Report, the Commission sometimes had more difficulty in finding funds than supplies. On many occasions they were prevented from transferring to Geneva the sums which donors abroad wished to contribute for the purchase of relief.

Foreseeing these difficulties, the ICRC and the League, upon beginning their joint activity in November 1940, at once approached the Bank of International Settlements. A joint account was opened, to which the donations that came in response to the appeal of November 1940 could be paid in all countries.

This Bank, like all others, had to comply with the financial controls established by the Allies. It was unable to make many

transfers for the account of the International Red Cross, as the neutral countries produced only few commodities in excess.

The Joint Relief Commission, to which the markets in the Axis satellite countries were still largely open, then turned its attention chiefly to collecting funds within the blockade area. But it was sometimes difficult to define the origin of such funds. For instance, were amounts lent by Swiss banks to relief agencies in occupied countries to be considered as subject to the regulations of the Trading with the Enemy Act? Or could funds deposited in Swiss banks in the name of nationals of occupied countries and released for use by the Joint Relief Commission serve to make purchases in countries that were subservient to the Axis? Persistent representations by the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission enabled these funds to be utilized, at least partially, in Eastern Europe ¹.

The freezing of Swiss assets in the United States caused no less difficulties. Assets which were the property of the ICRC in that country were treated in exactly the same way as those belonging to Swiss citizens; consequently, they could be transferred solely through the Swiss National Bank, the only agency which had a general license for dollar transfers.

During the early years of the war, the expenses of the ICRC were met for the most part by donations from the Swiss Government and people. But the extension of the war increased expenditure to such a degree that the ICRC had to make greater claims on the help of the Governments and Red Cross Societies of the belligerent countries. The funds which were paid to the ICRC in the Allied countries remained frozen in accounts opened in Great Britain and the United States. The only way in which these funds could be made available was to resort to the good offices of the Swiss National Bank, which accepted frozen gold and credited the Committee with its equivalent in Swiss francs. Operations of this kind sometimes exceeded the financial capacity of Switzerland, for whom an accumulation of frozen gold in Allied countries presented certain risks.

¹ For further particulars on this question, see the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

When requesting the British and United States Governments for authority to export supplies from Switzerland for humanitarian purposes, the ICRC also raised the question of transfers of currency. Arguing the impartial and disinterested nature of its activities, the Committee claimed the right to dispose freely of its assets in the Allied countries and to transfer them to Europe according to requirements. It emphasized that the amounts thus transferred would serve not to purchase supplies, but only to meet the overhead expenses of relief schemes and other humanitarian work.

The Allied authorities received this application favourably, and after negotiations, early in 1945, between their representatives and the ICRC, they facilitated the financial operations of the Committee, in so far as the legislation of the Allied countries and Switzerland permitted.

UNRRA and International Red Cross relief work.

During the war, civilian populations were not aided solely by the ICRC, the League and the Joint Relief Commission. Supplies reached them also from various official or private sources, such as Governments in exile, nationals residing overseas and religious associations. The following Chapter, which deals with humanitarian activities in the various countries, shows that these agencies very often asked for the cooperation of the ICRC and their delegates.

When the Axis forces were gradually compelled to abandon the territories they had occupied, relief to civilian populations grew to exceptional proportions and its greatest agent was UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). This body was set up by forty-four Allied Governments on November 9, 1943, in order to provide initial relief for the liberated Allied countries and to help to their recovery. The present Report cannot give any account of the remarkable achievements of UNRRA during its three years of intense activity. But a few words should be said of its connection with the International Red Cross which, through the Joint

Relief Commission, was engaged in similar work from 1941, although with far smaller resources.

In the summer of 1944, the ICRC sent a delegate to the United States to consult with the Directors of UNRRA on cooperation between the two agencies. These talks showed that, despite common features, the two organizations differed on several essential points.

UNRRA was concerned, as a rule, solely with Allied countries; it was only from 1945 that it extended its help to certain ex-enemy countries. Moreover, it handed over its gifts for the Governments to use as they saw fit; in particular, they could sell the supplies to the public for the benefit of the national exchequer.

By reason of its universality and strictly non-political character, the Red Cross was on the other hand bound to give assistance wherever the need arose. It was to be presumed that after having chiefly helped Allied nationals during the war, it would later have to act in the same way in behalf of Axis nationals. Further, the nature of Red Cross supplies is such that they are issued direct and free of charge to the recipients. Such were the main reasons why the ICRC could not give up its own work for civilian populations, nor merge into the new organization its own *ad hoc* agency for similar work. The Committee could not, at least officially and in its own name, make its delegates in the liberated countries available to UNRRA, although this would have been desirable in view of the services that these experts in matters of relief might thus have been able to render.

However, an observer of the ICRC attended the meetings of the UNRRA Council, and the latter organization had a representative in Switzerland. Thus, although each worked according to its own rules, the two organizations kept up relations which enabled them to exchange informations on the requirements of the war-stricken countries, and even on many occasions, to cooperate in a practical manner. Thus, when the UNRRA missions arrived in Greece and the Dodecanese to convey supplies to the civilian population, they were assisted by the Committee's delegations, who had preceded them

in this field. Likewise, distribution of parcels to Allied prisoners of war who were liberated *en masse* after the retreat of the German forces, was carried out jointly in Germany by UNRRA teams and the Committee's delegations.

Except for these special cases, the Joint Relief Commission remained independent. It held itself, in particular, at the disposal of neutral countries which were not members of UNRRA and of all donors who were anxious to relieve distress caused by the war, according to Red Cross principles, in disregard of any political considerations. In consequence, the activities of the Commission increased greatly during the immediate post-war period.

Distribution of Relief.

As a rule — and this was so mainly after the war in Poland, Belgium, Norway and Yugoslavia — the Red Cross Societies distributed relief direct in each country. If they were not approved by the occupying Power, the work was done by humanitarian organizations that were recognized by the occupying authorities. In certain cases where the national Red Cross as such was not given permission to carry on its work, means were nevertheless found, for instance in occupied Poland, to enlist the services of its local branches.

The delegate of the ICRC — or its agents in places where no regular delegate was at work — confined his duties as a rule to transmitting instructions from the donors and from the Joint Relief Commission to the distributing agencies. It was expressly stipulated : (1) that all necessary precautions should be taken to prevent the recipients from selling relief supplies on the black market ; (2) that all civilians in the service of the occupying Power, who ought therefore to be supplied solely by the latter, should be excluded from distributions. To ensure the application of these rules, the delegate carried out tests in the warehouses, supervised distribution and checked the reports made out by the receiving committees. The reports were then studied in Geneva by the Joint Relief Commission, and forwarded to the donors.

Consignments of foodstuffs sent to the occupied countries were, as a rule, provided firstly for children, and then for expectant and nursing mothers. The children usually received their rations in the day nurseries or school canteens; meals taken on the spot ruled out all possibility of illicit traffic.

When a whole population had to be fed (i. e. men, women and children, with the exception of persons working for the occupying Power), relief was distributed to the food shops and issued by these to the public against ration coupons. This method was adopted in Greece, the Dodecanese, the Channel Islands, and the Netherlands during the famine of 1945, and in the German pockets of resistance on the Atlantic Coast. But even in such cases the delegate of the ICRC took care that the supplies handed over to orphanages, day nurseries and hospitals were allocated in full to children and the sick.

Clothing supplies were particularly difficult to check. The delegate supervised distribution, it is true, but to make sure that the recipients did not sell them afterwards in order to buy extra food, periodical tests would have been required. When the British authorities proposed to lay this down as a condition to shipping clothes to the internee camps in the south of France, the ICRC decided that such tests were practically impossible. Civilians who are able to move about freely will clearly find it even easier to sell illicitly the articles which they receive as gifts for their personal use.

To keep medicaments out of the black market, these were almost always handed to hospitals, which had to keep a detailed record of their use. To this system the blockade authorities raised no objection, since it had been agreed that the whole population of the occupied territories, and not only women and children, could share in relief of this kind. Medical stores allocated to chemists were, as a rule, supplied direct to the patients on a doctor's prescription, mostly free of charge; if paid for, the proceeds went to relief organizations.

The above remarks give only a general picture. In practice, the Joint Relief Commission and the delegates of the ICRC had to conform to stipulations which varied from one country to another, and they were not always able to carry out their

work in entirely satisfactory conditions. Delegates sometimes had difficulty in gaining access to allocation schemes and, especially, detailed reports, either because the responsible associations were not yet properly organized, or because they considered any request for information as evidence of distrust. The donors, on the other hand, were most anxious to have exact information about the results of the relief programmes to which they had contributed, and showed signs of failing interest when this very legitimate wish was not met. The delegate of the ICRC often had the difficult task of smoothing over differences of this kind ¹.

§ 3. THE POST-WAR PERIOD

At the close of hostilities in Europe, the ICRC itself decided to liquidate the Joint Relief Commission, since this body had been set up by the ICRC and the League only for the duration of the war. The latter organisation agreed on this point with the ICRC. It was however settled that the Joint Relief Commission should be allowed to finish its current undertakings. It was also planned to set up a small Office, on the model of that which existed at the beginning of the war, which would maintain liaison between the ICRC and the League and coordinate the further relief activities of the National Red Cross Societies in behalf of civil populations. Other humanitarian institutions still in need of a neutral intermediary might have the service, the Committee thought, of a foundation similar to the Foundation for the organization of Red Cross Transports, established in 1942.

It proved, however, impossible to carry out this plan, for two reasons. In the first place, the liquidation of the Joint Relief Commission and the continuation of its work by two new organizations met with difficulties of a legal nature. Secondly, the liquidation would not have been opportune at the time, since it would have discouraged donors who were

¹ For fuller particulars about the allocation of relief, see the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

anxious to continue their help to war-victims, and for whom the name of the Joint Relief Commission, known throughout the world, was a guarantee that the scheme would be carried out surely, comparatively quickly and at small expense. The Joint Relief Commission therefore continued to exist.

With a view to better co-operation between the ICRC and the League, the Council of the Commission was replaced by an Executive Committee of three members, two of whom represented the ICRC and the League respectively, whilst the third was chosen by the two organizations. The decision of the ICRC and the League to continue their joint activities in this form was sanctioned by an agreement signed by their respective Chairmen at Paris, in November 1945, as the result of a discussion in the Executive Committee of the League. It was provided that the Joint Relief Commission should continue to function as long as it received relief supplies in quantities sufficient to cover its overhead charges.

For its part, the Advisory Conference of National Red Cross Societies, which was convened at Geneva by the League from October 15 to November 3, 1945, had recommended that "the question of collaboration between the League and the ICRC should be placed on the agenda of the next Session of the Board of Governors and that, in the interval, nothing should be done which might hinder current relief activities".

This recommendation of the National Red Cross Societies and of the executive of their Federation, confirmed the ICRC in its belief that, in the autumn of 1945, it would have been premature to interrupt material relief work for civilian populations. None the less, the question arose whether it should itself continue this work. This question had to be considered, not only as regards the possible liquidation of the Joint Relief Commission, but also in a general way, as soon as hostilities came to a close. Article VII of the Statutes of the International Red Cross instructs the ICRC to continue work in time of peace "for the relief of the evils regarded as consequences of the war". On the other hand, in order not to dissipate its energies, and also to encourage the re-establishment of normal relations, both between the National Red Cross Societies and between the

peoples themselves, it is the policy of the ICRC to relinquish its various activities as soon as the victims of the war are no longer in need of a neutral intermediary, and as soon as other national or international organizations are in a position to take useful action ¹.

As regards assistance to civil populations, the conditions prescribed in Article VII were undoubtedly to a large extent fulfilled. In 1945, however, the necessity for a neutral intermediary was just as obvious. It is true that there was nothing to prevent the victorious States in Europe from entering into direct relations with the more prosperous Allied countries, or with neutral States, and to appeal to the generosity of each. But such was the disorganization of the public services, of transport facilities, and sometimes also of the Red Cross Societies themselves, that it was impossible at the outset to dispense with the technical services either of the Joint Relief Commission or of the ICRC. The latter had already obtained, or was about to obtain, free transport, priority and other advantages for the movement of relief deliveries on the territories of the United Nations in Western Europe and in the neutral countries. The populations of the defeated countries, on the other hand, would have been deprived of the barest necessities, without the comparatively small gifts which the ICRC and its delegates could alone supply to them, despite many obstacles, at least during the initial period of the occupation.

In the autumn of 1945, the ICRC realised that the Red Cross had a peculiarly important mission to fulfil and that, in particular, the condition of the civil populations, no less than of the prisoners of war ², raised the problem of assistance to the defeated. The Red Cross Societies of the victorious nations were, at that time, wholly absorbed by their heavy duties in their own countries, or in the countries of their Allies ; the work of UNRRA was confined, at any rate at the outset, to relieving members of the United Nations. Private charity, with sadly restricted means, was therefore alone in a position to help war

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 43 and 46.

² See above pp. 99 et seq.

victims without distinction. The ICRC did not hesitate to offer itself to private welfare agencies, as an instrument for benefiting the civil populations of countries occupied by the United Nations, just as during hostilities it had, at the request of donors in Allied or neutral countries, set on foot large-scale relief for the civil populations of countries occupied by the Axis forces. In the view of the ICRC, its activities constitute of necessity a whole, from the outset of the conflict until the final conclusion of peace, i.e. until international relations are completely re-established. It was therefore important that, despite the feelings of resentment and rancour induced in millions of people by the savage nature of the conflict, the spirit of absolute impartiality, which is that of the Red Cross, should once more be given full play. The ICRC had some difficulty, however, in upholding the motto *Inter arma caritas*, and in thus properly fulfilling its duties as a neutral intermediary. In this connection, Germany, where the difficulties were greater than anywhere else, is a typical case; that is why the following pages will be mainly concerned with that country¹.

During May 1945, until the occupying forces took over State control, indescribable chaos reigned in Germany. Disorder was rife; the appalling destructions the absence of millions of able-bodied men still prisoners of war, the large-scale evacuations, together with the exhaustion and privations which the people had suffered during the last months of the war and the crushing effect of defeat, reduced the civil population to a state where they were unable to attend to their own needs. Still less could they attend to the many *Volksdeutsche* who were pouring in from the Polish provinces, and from the territories where they had formed compact groups, in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia. To make matters worse, vast numbers of aliens still remained in Germany: Allied prisoners of war, who had to be fed by means of the ICRC vehicles until their own national Commissariats could care for them; civilian workers, forcibly recruited in the occupied

¹ Further details on Germany, and the consideration of the same problem as it arose in other countries will be found on p. 401 et seq.

countries and who, like the prisoners, could not be immediately repatriated; and finally, the displaced persons. Of these last, some hundreds of thousands hesitated about returning to their country of origin; demoralised and embittered by long years of suffering, they rendered the food situation even more precarious, and sometimes even endangered the safety of the native population. True, UNRRA came to their assistance after a few weeks, but the statutes of this organization compelled it to leave a large proportion of them without assistance.

Among the countries bordering on Germany, two had not suffered directly from the war: Sweden and Switzerland, and it was from them that the first relief came. The ICRC did all in its power to facilitate the despatch of these supplies, in particular those which came direct from Switzerland, or passed through Swiss territory. As has already been stated, the ICRC on several occasions, in particular in a Memorandum of August, 1945, requested permission to send into Germany, at least for Allied former prisoners of war and for civilian workers and displaced persons from the Allied countries, the large quantities of goods which had accumulated in Geneva by the end of 1944¹.

The supplies available for the German civil population at first comprised a part of the stocks held by welfare organizations in Sweden and Switzerland, and by the Joint Relief Commission; the last were very slender; for the Red Cross very rarely, as we know, received donations not specifically earmarked and, up to the time of the armistice, very little had been allocated for the Axis Powers. Moreover, some time passed before the thousands of truckloads of supplies furnished by the Swiss Relief Fund and the Irish Donation arrived.

Thus, while large and regular consignments were already *en route* for the Western countries, and later for the South-West of Europe, the revictualling of Germany at first lacked all system and was confined to isolated, unofficial sources; no special agreements on the subject had been made with the Allied General Staffs, and the ICRC vehicles entered Germany duty free merely by permission of local military commanders.

¹ See above p. 118.

A few weeks later, however, when the occupying Powers had set up an administration, the ICRC asked for official authority for the entry of goods intended either for the German people or for aliens detained in Germany. However, the occupying authorities were not yet at that date ready to grant such permission, at any rate as regards the German population. It was maintained, in particular, that by the terms of the Potsdam Agreement the standard of living of Germans could not be superior to that of the peoples who had suffered occupation by Hitler's armies. Nevertheless, the ICRC, which had been informed by the reports of its delegates from South-Eastern Europe and also by appeals for help, of the migrations of *Volksdeutsche* and their tragic consequences, was certain that the occupying authorities could not long remain indifferent to the situation of these millions of people, including many women and children, who had no fixed abode, no shelter, and no means of existence. On September 7, 1945, the ICRC drew the attention of the American, British, French and Russian Governments to the wretched plight of these refugees, and offered to report on their most urgent needs and to hand out to them the supplies it had received from Governments and private donors for this purpose.

As, however, the *Volksdeutsche* were now spreading throughout the whole German territory, any scheme of relief would have to include the entire population, without distinction. The special delegate sent by the ICRC to the four General Staffs of the occupying armies had thus to seek their consent to the supply of relief, not only to the refugees but also to the stable German population. These attempts achieved an early success ; from the autumn of 1945 onwards, relief supplies were allowed to enter, and the Committee's delegations were able to start work in the French and British zones, as well as in Berlin. The American and Russian authorities did not grant permission until the early months of 1946 ¹.

Thus, in the spring of 1946, the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission were in a position, one through diplomatic means, the other in the practical field, to transmit relief supplies to

¹ For further details see pp. 424 et seq.

civilians, whether they belonged to the United Nations or the defeated countries. As regards the United Nations in Western Europe and Italy, such action now became rare, for these countries had restored their external relations, both political and material, to a point where they could do without the services of a neutral intermediary and no longer needed the assistance of the International Red Cross. In fact, they themselves now gave assistance to that body—this was especially so in the case of France, Belgium and Italy—by granting free transit facilities, or at any rate considerable reductions in tariffs, for the consignments of the Joint Relief Commission passing through their territories.

A year after the end of the war in Europe, the question again arose whether the Joint Relief Commission was still in a position to do all that the ICRC and the League expected of it. For reasons which will be found in the Report of the League to the Stockholm Conference, the Board of Governors of the League, at its XIXth Session held at Oxford, in July 1946, discussed the problem, which had already been considered in Paris by the League Executive Committee in the autumn of 1945, and passed a Resolution, the substance of which ran as follows: Relief supplies given by a Red Cross should, as far as possible, be transmitted direct to another Red Cross Society. The Joint Relief Commission should cease its activities altogether, that is to say, it should refuse all new commissions, even from Red Cross Societies.

This Resolution was officially communicated to the ICRC on July 29, 1946, at the time when the Preliminary Conference of Red Cross Societies was sitting in Geneva. The Committee was thus able to discuss the matter at once with the Chairman of the League. By a joint circular dated September 4, the ICRC and the League issued the following statement to all National Red Cross Societies, the chief donors outside the Red Cross, and to Governments and the public: The Board of Governors of the League, judging that the supply of relief to civil populations could, in most cases, be made direct by donors to recipients without the assistance of the Joint Relief Commission, had asked for the winding-up of the Commission within six months. In order, however, to give donors an opportunity of

meeting the new situation, the Joint Relief Commission was ready to accept, up to October 31, all commissions which could be put through before the end of the current year. The ICRC agreed to this liquidation, but it was understood that, after November 1, both the ICRC and the League would continue to facilitate, in accordance with their statutes and in the spirit of the Red Cross, all consignments of relief to civil populations who were victims of the war.

In fact, after an initial post-war diminution, gifts sent to the Joint Relief Commission had increased again in the early summer of 1946, and it was estimated that the countries who benefited thereby would still be in need either of a neutral intermediary, or, in the case of United Nations populations, at least of organizations having the technical experience and the privileges which the ICRC, the Joint Relief Commission and the League had acquired during the war.

In this belief, the League expanded its secretariat in Geneva and offered its services to all Red Cross Societies anxious to aid civil populations. The ICRC gladly lent its support to this undertaking, thus giving fresh proof of that desire for co-operation which, in 1940, had led to the foundation of the Joint Relief Commission. The ICRC now supplied the League with information concerning the requirements of civil populations; this information appeared, with other data, in the Information Bulletin for the co-ordination of relief, published in Geneva by the League from July 1946 onwards. The Committee lent its support to the League's application—which was speedily granted—to the Swiss Authorities, for the same privileges (free transit, free warehousing and facilities for rapid export) which had been accorded formerly to the ICRC, the League, and to their organ, the Joint Relief Commission.

As, contrary to expectation, it was necessary to continue warehousing and assembling part of the deliveries in Geneva, the ICRC offered the League space in its own warehouses for 180 tons of relief goods, and made itself responsible for sending on supplies. These were small at first, but reached 36 tons in June, 1947¹.

¹ In August and Sept., 1947, the amount reached the figure of 135 tons.

In those countries where the League had not as yet all the required facilities, or where the assistance of a neutral intermediary was needed, the delegations of the ICRC (e.g. in Germany, Belgium, Northern Italy, at Cairo, etc.) dealt with the receipt, forwarding and distribution of relief goods for which the League was responsible.

After overcoming the difficulties inherent in the winding up of an organization in full activity, the League was soon able to act as a useful intermediary for the National Red Cross Societies in transmitting their gifts to civil populations.

There remained, however, a delicate problem to be solved, that of the "non-Red Cross" gifts, i.e. the funds or goods received from a donor country, which had not passed through the channel of the Red Cross of that particular country¹. Apart from the supplies given by UNRRA and other international government organizations, the transmission of which the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission were not called upon to ensure, this category comprised consignments from various Governments (Swiss Relief Fund, Irish Donation, etc.), international religious organizations, municipalities, national associations, groups formed under the sponsorship of towns, etc., and finally, private contributors. These "non-Red Cross" gifts had constituted the major part of the relief transmitted by the Joint Commission during and after the war; but there was a risk of these sources drying up if the services, both practical and economic, of a neutral intermediary failed just at the moment when the generosity of the public was beginning to show signs of flagging.

The question now arose whether the privileges accorded to the Red Cross should be exercised for the transmission of gifts which had not passed through the Red Cross of the donor country, and in particular for the gifts not destined for an entire population.

At the time of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and later during the World War of 1914-1918, the ICRC had already been asked to forward gifts from families, institutions other than the

¹ This matter is touched on in Vol. I, p. 38. It is also dealt with in the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Red Cross, and Governments. During the recent War, the importance both absolute and relative, of gifts of this kind increased largely. In proof, we need only consider the remarkable development of the aid afforded by religious associations to prisoners of war, by Jewish organizations to civilians in Europe and the Far East who were victims of racial persecution, by various Allied Governments to their nationals who were prisoners, and finally, the increasing help given by Governments compelled to seek refuge abroad, to the civil populations resident in their home countries under enemy occupation. The greater part of these donations, valued at several hundred million Swiss francs, had, as was well known to the Governments concerned, enjoyed priority and freedom of transport, transit concessions and customs exemption, these advantages having been granted to the ICRC for all relief goods sent to prisoners of war and, very often, for those sent to civil populations.

The ICRC had been granted this extension of Red Cross privileges solely because it ensured that even gifts not originally sponsored by the Red Cross should be distributed in accordance with the rule of impartial charity which is the feature of the Red Cross. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that, in the matter of relief parcels, the Prisoners of War Convention had its origins in the individual parcel system, that is to say, in the system by which relief is sent direct from the donor to the recipient.

But was it feasible to adhere strictly to the principle of impartiality in the distribution of "non-Red Cross" gifts to civil populations? The ICRC regards this principle as essential; during the last phase of the War, it could not, however, always be sure of having been faithful to this policy. From the Red Cross point of view, relief ought to be allocated solely in accordance with the existing needs and their degree of urgency, without any regard for either side in a war, or for political, social or religious parties. The effect of this principle is, clearly, that when needs are not equally urgent everywhere, assistance given in various quarters will not be in mathematically equal amounts. During the first war years, relief work for the Allies was very much greater in proportion to that afforded to their adversaries, while after the armistice, the ICRC, apart from its

activities in aid of displaced persons and the civil populations of Central and Eastern Europe, dealt almost exclusively with nationals of the Axis Powers, especially of Germany.

Furthermore, the ICRC had not been at liberty to issue supplies as it thought best to prisoners of war of certain Allied countries, for example, nor to any civil population. In its capacity of trustee and forwarding agent, on the contrary, it had to comply with the wishes of the donors, who also—including the National Red Cross Societies—received considerable funds from the public for quite definite purposes. Had the ICRC, therefore, only accepted donations for distribution to all war victims, solely according to their needs, it would have been compelled, even during the war, to cease practically all its efforts to help not only civil populations, but also prisoners of war¹. It is true that the ICRC endeavoured, sometimes not entirely in vain, to get the National Red Cross Societies and other donors to agree that a certain amount of relief goods should be held in common for all prisoners, no matter of what nationality. But it is not less true that the restrictions placed on its activities caused very great disparities in the distribution of goods, even as regards any single group of belligerents.

This was, however, of small importance, as long as the ICRC was the only possible intermediary between donors and recipients, as was the case during the War, and in 1946-1947 also as regards certain territories. In these circumstances, the Red Cross could not, on the plea that a different destination would be more suitable, refuse any offer of relief, for it was essential that aid should be given at all costs to war victims of every kind. On the other hand, when means of sending aid apart from the Red Cross became available, the ICRC preferred to accept only those commissions which could be executed in a spirit of complete impartiality, while favouring, even in the post-war period, generous offers of a non-political nature.

The ICRC applied the same policy to the transmission of "non-Red Cross" relief to civil populations. After the liquidation of the Joint Relief Commission, the ICRC at first thought

¹ For further details, see Vol. 1, p. 16 et seq.

of temporarily undertaking this work, but abandoned the idea for three reasons :

(1) — In the first place, the ICRC was anxious to husband its resources. True, it was entitled to cover expenses by imposing a levy calculated at the end of each year, either by the system applied to PW relief, or on a fixed percentage basis, as had been the practice of the Joint Relief Commission. Either method would have enabled it, as in the past, to debit its general budget only with the small amounts which were not repayable. The creation of a special department to deal with civil populations would have meant diverting to this new task a section of its staff, which was already hardly numerous enough to deal with current business, even if experienced assistants had been transferred from the Joint Relief Commission.

(2) — A special department, functioning only for a few months, would have caused exactly the sort of confusion that had been avoided, in 1940, by the constitution of a joint organ of the ICRC and the League. The League from that time had in fact an organization of its own to deal with the transmission of gifts from National Red Cross Societies.

(3) — Finally, on its being decided that the Joint Relief Commission should be dissolved, it appeared essential that a " non-Red Cross " successor should be found, so as to limit direct intervention by the ICRC to the fairly brief period—as it was then hoped it would prove to be—during which relief would be needed by civil populations.

With the approval therefore of the General Secretariat of the League, the ICRC looked for a successor in this work, and on November 1, 1946 (from which date the Joint Relief Commission entered into liquidation, or in other words, refused any further commissions) the ICRC and the League made the following announcement by a general Circular addressed to the National Red Cross Societies, to the chief " non-Red Cross " donors and to Governments :

(1) — Donations from National Red Cross Societies would in the future be forwarded by the League.

(2) — The ICRC would continue, in accordance with its statutes and its humanitarian traditions, to facilitate the despatch of relief to civil populations, particularly in cases where a neutral intermediary was indispensable.

(3) — An "International Centre for Relief for Civil Populations" which had just been established in Geneva, would accept, from November 1 onwards, any commissions from donor organizations for the receipt, purchase, transport and distribution of relief supplies destined for civil populations in distress as a result of the war. In accordance with the agreements concluded between the ICRC and the League, this Centre, which was taking over the personnel, offices and, as far as possible, the working methods of the Joint Relief Commission, would carry out, in the name of the Commission and on its account, any mandate not executed when the Commission ceased work.

Relief for civil populations was therefore assured for as long as might prove necessary, in accordance with the desire of the ICRC and the League that no obstacle should be placed in the way of non-political relief work.

We will not dwell here on the many practical difficulties which were necessarily incurred by the disappearance of the Joint Relief Commission and the substitution of new organizations¹. A few words may however be added on the subject of the Committee's activities up to the end of June, 1947.

In conformity with the circular of November 1, the ICRC offered its services to the League², to the Centre and to any other institution requiring support.

In order to encourage donations for civil populations, the ICRC formed a service for passing on appeals for relief to the League, the major international welfare organizations, the Swiss Relief Fund, various other relief organizations, and the public. These appeals were a measure of the acute distress suffered by countries which had been ravaged by the war. The ICRC also discovered that relief work was becoming day by

¹ Further details on this subject will be found in the General Report of the Joint Relief Commission and in the report to be made by the League to the International Red Cross Conference.

² See above, p. 391.

day more difficult. Donors were slackening in enthusiasm, those countries which had not been affected by the war wished to cease sending relief in order to concentrate on improving social conditions in their own territories, and the Governments themselves decided to bring UNRRA's activities to an end.

The League and the international or national institutions to which the ICRC forwarded its appeals, were frequently obliged to reply that they themselves were receiving requests of the same kind, and that they were unable to make any substantial response. The ICRC, acting in agreement with organizations whose headquarters were in Switzerland and with the Swiss groups, persevered, however, in supplying and exchanging information concerning needs for relief, in particular by way of the unofficial monthly meetings that took place in turn at the headquarters of each of these institutions, and at which the following organizations were represented: Caritas Catholica Internationalis (Lucerne), the World Council of Churches, the Union O.S.E., the International Union for Child Welfare, the World Alliance of Y.W.C.A., the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A., the International Centre for Relief of Civil Populations, the American Friends Service Committee and the European Student Relief.

The members of these meetings, joined soon after by representatives of various other relief or social organizations, published, under the auspices of the ICRC, appeals to world public opinion, at the beginning of each winter. They hoped thus to encourage the generosity of countries and of peoples who had not suffered from the war, or who had been less affected than others by its consequences. The first appeal was launched in October 1945 by the ICRC, the International Union for Child Welfare, the Caritas Catholica Internationalis, the World Jewish Congress and the World Council of Churches. These stated their readiness to unite in order to rescue the children of Europe from their tragic fate, without distinction of nationality, race or religion. Though the League was unable, for comprehensible reasons of a statutory nature, to associate itself formally with this appeal, it was none the less conscious of the serious nature of the problem. This is clear from the message

which, jointly with the ICRC, it addressed in November 1945 to the National Red Cross Societies, and which reflected the emotion with which forty-three of these Societies, meeting in an Advisory Conference called by the League, had heard the reports on this distressing subject made by many delegates. The National Red Cross Societies were asked to give further evidence of their generosity and fellowship, by helping to put an end to one of the worst calamities that had ever menaced the children, not only of Europe but of the entire world.

During the winter of 1946-1947, the ICRC and the international institutions with headquarters in Switzerland repeated their appeal to the whole world, calling on every individual to make, as far as his means permitted, a donation to the national or international organizations which based their activities on the principle of impartial aid to all human beings in distress. Hopes had been entertained of a considerable improvement in the circumstances of war-victims during 1947. But throughout the Northern hemisphere, and especially in Europe, the harvests were so poor that in December a third appeal was launched, under the auspices of the ICRC, by the nine institutions already mentioned, urging once more, in the name of human fellowship, the need for supplying immediate aid to all in distress.

In the matter of publications, the ICRC tried to avoid duplication by supplying one or other of the above-mentioned organizations with abundant data ; practically all of these bodies themselves also published bulletins and surveys. As the ICRC appeared, for the moment, to be the only organization capable of dealing direct with such questions, it instructed its Medical Division to study the ill effects of undernourishment and poor housing conditions on the health of civil populations ; if the public were enlightened on this matter, they would better realise the urgent need for assistance. In June 1946, a first report appeared, in which a vivid picture was drawn of the decline in health observed, chiefly among people who had been suffering for long years from restrictions of every kind. This report formed the basis of the appeal sent out in the autumn of 1946 by all the major relief organizations.

After the liquidation of the Joint Relief Commission, the Civil Populations Service of the Medical Division was enlarged, so as to provide all those interested with the general or special documents they required. The greater part of these data were based on information obtained by the Committee's delegations from the competent authorities on the spot ; the rest came from National Red Cross Societies, or from officials who visited Geneva. In its publications, of which two more appeared in November 1946 and August 1947, the ICRC had tried to give details of the conditions in the largest possible number of countries, partly to achieve impartiality, and partly because general reports were much less frequent than those on special aspects of the subject. These summaries were widely quoted in the Press, among the national and international relief organizations, National Red Cross Societies, and in official and scientific circles. Fresh printings had to be made, both in French and English, to satisfy the heavy demand from official departments, welfare associations and the many people interested in the social consequences of the war.

On December 26, 1946, the ICRC signed an agreement for cooperation with the International Centre for Relief for Civil Populations, the work of which was similar to that of the Relief Department of the League Secretariat. The ICRC undertook to support any steps taken by the Centre to obtain facilities for export and for the conversion of money in the donor countries, as well as the same privileges as the Joint Relief Commission, e.g. as regards the transit of supplies.

In return, the Centre could, on payment of their expenses, claim the services of the delegations which the ICRC still maintained in the countries to which assistance was being given, as long as their activities were of a non-political nature, or in conformity with the Red Cross principle of strict impartiality, i.e. as long as they dealt with all the necessitous people in a given country or territory. The ICRC knew, however, by experience that donors often wished to restrict their gifts to a certain category of recipients ; by refusing its services in such cases, there was a danger that it would obstruct a considerable part of such welfare work. A compromise was necessary. It was recom-

mended to the Centre that it should endeavour to coordinate these donations of restricted scope with one another, or with the more general donations, so that ultimately the relief sent to a country, or a group of countries devastated by the war, would be sufficiently comprehensive. Naturally, all activities had to be sanctioned by the authorities of the countries concerned and, in so far as the ICRC was an intermediary, to conform with the general arrangements made with the authorities.

The scruples which the ICRC felt as regards the principle of strict impartiality were heightened during 1947. The donors, moreover, while still inspired by a true spirit of charity, became more and more strongly inclined to send individual parcels, or relief in a form which would emphasise the activities of the political or religious institutions in which they had a major interest. The ICRC was unable to follow this policy, especially at a time when its intervention was no longer indispensable, other paths now being open to public charity. As a result, the ICRC gradually ceased its practice of sending on individual parcels, whenever the post office could take them over; it practically succeeded, in the course of the first half of 1947, in checking the flood of packages which were sent from all directions to Geneva, usually without previous notice. As regards collective donations for relief for a stipulated purpose, the ICRC requested the donors, or their agents, to ask the authorities concerned for leave to send them direct to their destination. The countries which could only be dealt with through a neutral intermediary were now luckily becoming fewer. For this reason the ICRC which, as we have seen, is compelled by its statutes to limit its activities as soon as circumstances permit¹, was led to restrict still further its work in forwarding relief to the civil populations affected by the second World War².

¹ See p. 385.

² In the Supplementary Report for the period July 1947 to Dec. 1948, an account will be found of the ICRC's collaboration with the Centre for Relief for Civil Populations, the League and various other relief organizations, in the case of several countries where a neutral intermediary could still be of service.

Chapter 2

Relief to Individual Countries

§ I. ALBANIA

The limited relief that the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission were able to give to the Albanian population was considerably delayed by adverse circumstances.

Albania did not, like Greece, have the advantage of aid from colonies of its nationals living abroad, sufficiently numerous and well-off to supply her with relief funds. Moreover, Albania was, during the second World War, one of the most difficult European countries to supply from abroad.

As early as 1944, the condition of the Albanian population became very grave. Appeals were made to the ICRC both by the Government and by the Resistance¹. Medicaments, food-stuffs and clothing were urgently needed for nearly 50,000 children.

A member of the Committee's delegation in Greece reached Albania in May 1944. After discussions with representatives of the Albanian Red Cross, the Government and the Resistance, he drew up a plan for forwarding and distributing supplies. The ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission took steps to find donors willing to assist a homeless population numbering, by the figures of the Albanian Red Cross, more than 170,000 people.

The gifts actually received amounted only to 51,500 francs. It was not until the summer of 1945 that the Joint Relief

¹ The Anti-Fascist Committee for Albanian National Liberation.

Commission was able to forward via Bari 1,241 kilos of clothing, 6,872 kilos of foodstuffs, and 550 kilos of pharmaceutical supplies. Since communications across the Adriatic were re-established only several months after the end of hostilities, the goods warehoused at Bari did not arrive in Albania until the autumn of 1945. They were distributed with the assistance of two delegates of the ICRC, who, in travelling about the country, were able to decide where needs were most urgent.

In spite of the considerable activities of UNRRA, the situation in Albania improved only very slowly. The State was supporting 35,000 children, of whom 10,000 were orphans; 70,000 women and old people were living in deplorable conditions, and 23,000 refugees from Greece were completely destitute¹. Renewed assistance was essential. With the aid of the Swiss Relief Fund and the Irish Donation, the Joint Relief Commission was able to increase its work in Albania and to assist most of these stricken people.

Other gifts unfortunately could not be used until more than a year had elapsed. In August 1944, in fact, the ICRC delegation in Cairo was in possession of £E 7,000, collected by the Albanian Minister in Cairo; £E 5,000 was a gift from the Egyptian Government, and £E 2,000 came from a charity sale organized by Albanian ladies.

Despite the personal intervention of the Egyptian Finance Minister, these funds could not be transferred to Geneva. It was only at the end of 1945 that the Cairo Delegation managed to place the £E 7,000 at the disposal of the London Delegation, which used this sum for purchasing relief stores for the Albanian population in the sterling areas¹.

§ 2. AUSTRIA

At the end of the war in the spring of 1945, the situation of Austria was particularly tragic. A large part of her territory had been devastated, while a vast influx of refugees

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

had served to heighten her already considerable economic difficulties.

Upper Austria, with a normal population of about one million, was accommodating some 600,000 immigrants. These included Hungarian refugees, members of German minorities from the Sudetenland, Hungary and Yugoslavia, many South Tyrolese and displaced persons. Food rations were below the living minimum and medical supplies were virtually exhausted.

The partition of Austria into four zones of occupation made relief schemes extremely difficult. The first shipments were hastily improvised and despatched mainly from Switzerland. The Committee's delegation established in Vienna in the spring of 1945, which had organised soup kitchens even before the surrender, exerted themselves in behalf of expectant and nursing mothers, children's homes, TB patients reported by the municipal health service, and a large number of repatriates. Medical and pharmaceutical supplies were sent chiefly to maternity and children's hospitals.

Until rail communications were restored, the relief supplies were transported by road from Switzerland, with the unofficial consent of the local authorities. To distribute the supplies according to the wishes of the donors, delegations were set up in Vienna, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Linz; these co-operated with the local agencies. The relief thus contributed was quite disproportionate to the needs. Nevertheless, as the Viennese authorities recognised, the ICRC and the Swiss Relief Fund played a leading part in feeding the country during that period.

When the railways began to function in 1946, the Joint Relief Commission was able to send its shipments by block-trains. Concurrently, the UNRRA services were expanded. It soon became clear that these various relief actions would have to be co-ordinated. At the beginning of 1946 the Inter-Allied Commission in Vienna requested the organizations to submit all distribution plans for their approval. The Austrian Government, on its side, appointed the Ministry of Social Insurance to co-ordinate relief activities; the scheme was to be as far as possible in accordance with the wishes of the donors.

This step greatly facilitated the import of relief, duty and carriage free ; and the Committee's delegates no longer had to make daily arrangements for the forwarding and storage of goods. They continued, however, to notify Geneva of the requests for help, mainly for the refugees ¹.

§ 3. BELGIUM

From the outbreak of the war in the West, the ICRC kept in close contact with the Belgian Red Cross and with those of its units which had withdrawn to France to care for the Belgian refugees. The Committee was thus able to follow the food situation, which soon became very difficult. Information from this source was supplemented by reports from the Committee's delegates on their visits to PW camps in the occupied zones, and by prominent Belgians who came to Geneva to plead the cause of the undernourished women and children.

Collections were made amongst the Belgian organizations in Switzerland. In addition, a joint appeal issued by the ICRC and the League on November 22, 1940, elicited substantial contributions for the relief of women and children in Belgium. Finally, to meet a steadily increasing food shortage, the ICRC devoted a large proportion of its freely disposable funds for the purchase of relief for Belgium.

Even before it had full status, the Joint Relief Commission was made responsible, by the ICRC and the League, for the co-ordination of relief for the Belgian civilians ; in particular, the Commission received for distribution almost the whole of two large gifts from the Government of the Belgian Congo ².

The Committee's Relief Department sent the following goods between November 1940 and April 1942 (in kilograms) :

Condensed milk	2,700 cases	67,160
Cheese	62 „	940
Chestnut purée	167 „	3,760
(gift of the Belgian Congo Government)		

¹ For particulars regarding the foodstuffs, clothing and medical supplies sent to Austria by the Joint Relief Commission, on behalf of numerous donors, see the Commission's Report.

² For particulars see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Jemalt	40 cases	1,823
Cenovis yeast	40 „	1,280
Milk products	20 „	760
Nestrovit	1 „	60
Sundry foods	169 parcels	3,823
Pure vitamin C	2 cases	70
Salt fish	22 barrels	1,700
Ovaltine	40 cases	1,580
Condensed milk	50 „	1,175
Clothing (Various shipments to the Belgian Red Cross from the Lausanne Committee for the Relief of Belgian PW and Internees)	20 „	863
Clothing (gift of the Belgian Embassy in Washington)	4 „	160

All these shipments were addressed to the representative of the German Red Cross in Brussels, and consequently were exempt from freight charges and customs dues. The representative handed them over to the Belgian Red Cross, which acknowledged receipt to the ICRC and distributed the relief to maternity homes and welfare institutions.

In order to increase this aid, which was still far from adequate, the Winter Relief, an organization set up to assist the civilian population and collaborate with the National Red Cross Society, sent a delegation to Geneva to consult with the ICRC on suitable measures. Close and fruitful co-operation then developed between the Winter Relief, the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission, which had just begun operations for the women and children. As the Winter Relief had succeeded in mobilising the credits and funds of the leading Belgian banks in Switzerland, Hungary and Rumania, considerable purchases could be made in those countries through the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission ¹.

The Joint Relief Commission's consignments, however, were only a relatively small proportion of the total supplies sent to the Belgian civilian population. At the end of 1940, the Belgian Government in London set up an organization in

¹ For particular, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Portugal for the relief of the population in occupied Belgium. In the spring of 1941 a "Co-ordination Committee for the Provisioning of Belgium by Europe" was set up in Lisbon to centralise these vast shipments of foodstuffs from Portugal. A "Joint Committee for the Distribution of Relief in Belgium", in Brussels, comprising the principal welfare organizations of the country, under the chairmanship of M. Paul Heymans (who was also chairman of the Winter Relief), shared out the material among the various organizations, including the Belgian Red Cross, the Winter Relief and the National Child Welfare Office, which carried out the distribution. Because of their activity for the women and children of Belgium, the ICRC—and from 1941 the Joint Relief Commission also—maintained close relations with these Belgian organizations.

* In November 1942, the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission were requested by the German authorities to send a delegation to Berlin in order to examine the whole question of Belgian relief. In the course of these meetings, which were also attended by the heads of the relief distributing agencies in Belgium, the German authorities stated that no more direct shipments of foodstuffs by the Co-ordination Committee in Portugal would be permitted; that is to say, the Germans were opposed to the people of Belgium being fed by an agency controlled by the Belgian Government abroad. On the other hand, they had no objection to the relief being distributed under the auspices and through the intermediary of a strictly neutral and non-political body such as the ICRC.

To avoid any interruption in the flow of relief, the ICRC stated its readiness, in principle, to take over these new responsibilities, subject to having a representative in Belgium. The Committee felt that if it was to handle the shipment of relief from Lisbon and give satisfaction to the donors, it should also supervise the goods on their arrival and in their distribution. This arrangement was approved by the Belgian Government; the Joint Relief Commission undertook the technical organization of these shipments.

The ICRC thereupon set up a delegation in Brussels, enlarged the one already in Lisbon, and sent a representative to Spain

whose mission was to forward the foodstuffs, reaching Spain by sea, to the representative of the German Red Cross at the Franco-Spanish border, who sent them on to the German Red Cross representative in Brussels. The goods were delivered in Brussels in the presence of the ICRC delegates and the representatives of the Belgian relief agencies.

Despite these substantial consignments from Portugal, the food situation remained precarious, and in the spring of 1943, when reserve stocks of wheat were practically exhausted, even became alarming. The ICRC endeavoured to close the gaps until the new harvest. In response to an appeal, the Swiss Government offered 14,700 tons of wheat which it held in Philadelphia: payment was to be made by the Belgian Government in London, and the wheat was to be carried in Swiss vessels in May 1943. This scheme, however, required the sanction of the blockade authorities, to whom the ICRC once more appealed for a waiver of the regulations in force. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Economic Warfare replied on July 1 that, after careful study of the question and despite its desire to accede to the wishes of the ICRC, it regretted its inability to grant the required navicerts. A further proposal by the ICRC for the grant of an extra ration of bread for Belgian children in the winter of 1943/44 was also refused in November 1943, in spite of the intervention of the Belgian Government in London.

The shipments from Portugal continued to reach Brussels regularly, but a new difficulty soon arose: the German authorities suspected that a part of these relief shipments were finding their way into the black market, and proposed that they themselves should supervise the reception and distribution of the goods. Such a measure, or even the supervision of distribution by the German Red Cross—which had also been contemplated—would have had a most disastrous effect on the relief programme and would have alienated the donors.

The ICRC delegation in Brussels immediately took steps and the German authorities, the Winter Relief and the Belgian Red Cross finally agreed that the ICRC delegation in Brussels should be responsible for reception and distribution. In order to carry out this new assignment, which entailed painstaking

vigilance from the time the relief goods arrived to their handing over to the consumer, the ICRC was obliged to increase its delegation.

When the Allies landed in France, communications between Portugal and Belgium were cut off and the Coordination Committee decided on June 16, 1944, to suspend its activity until the resumption of railway transport.

The Belgian population was still supplied, however, from Switzerland, particularly with foodstuffs which could still be sent by rail across Germany from Eastern Europe. An ICRC mission and the Joint Relief Commission had further conversations in Brussels with the occupation authorities, and sought to obtain some relaxation of the restrictions they had imposed in view of the military situation.

Despite the effective cooperation of the German railways, a large part of the cereals bought in Hungary by the Joint Relief Commission did not reach Belgium before its liberation by the Allied forces in September 1944, after which date the Belgian Government took over the task of provisioning the country. As will be seen later, the relief goods which were stocked in Germany were used for relief work in occupied Holland ¹.

In the period which followed the liberation of Belgium, the Joint Relief Commission continued to dispatch numerous relief trains to that country, as the ICRC delegation in Paris, after difficult negotiations with the French authorities and the Allied Military Command, managed to obtain the necessary permits. The stocks which remained in Portugal were also sent on to Belgium ².

§ 4. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On the German occupation of the whole of Czechoslovakia in May, 1939, Slovakia was declared an independent State, while Bohemia and Moravia were made a Protectorate.

Because of its peculiar status, Czechoslovakia was not included in the programme drawn up by the ICRC and the

¹ See below p. 497.

² See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

League, and accepted by the Germans for assistance to occupied countries through the intermediary of the Joint Relief Commission. Moreover, all through the war, the food situation in these regions was never as unfavourable as in other occupied countries. Even in 1944, the ICRC representative in Slovakia was still able to buy food, principally sugar, which he sent to his colleague in Vienna for the Jewish population.

Only towards the end of the war, shortly before the liberation, were the ICRC representatives in Prague and Bratislava able to furnish irregular aid to the civilian population.

The representative at Prague, although with slight resources, assisted the persons wounded during the relieving battles, thus replacing the Red Cross installed by the Germans, now in flight. Soon after, the Czechoslovak Red Cross was sufficiently reorganized, and able to take over this work.

In the weeks following the liberation, the ICRC maintained daily wireless contact with its representative in Prague. To meet an urgent demand for medicaments, partly for the internees at Terezin, partly for the civilian population, the Committee obtained authority from the Allied Supreme Command to despatch a fleet of trucks, organized by the Joint Relief Commission and the Special Aid Division of the ICRC. Since these supplies were urgently needed, the ICRC had first of all tried to send them to Prague by air, but authorization for the flight was only granted as far as Pilsen. It would then have been necessary to find rolling stock in this town and reload the goods; the ICRC, therefore, preferred to use road transport for the entire route from Switzerland to Prague.

At Bratislava, under the German occupation, the ICRC representative helped the Jewish population¹. Under an agreement with the Jewish donor, he was able to use part of the funds for aid to the civilian population at large.

The reconstruction work accomplished in Czechoslovakia was such that, even shortly after the war, relief was less urgently needed in Czechoslovakia than in other countries. Action by the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission did not appear to

¹ See below p. 523.

be indispensable either, as the donors were soon in direct communication with Czechoslovakia. However, the representative of the ICRC in Prague applied for carriage and duty free transport of relief goods for the civilian population. This was granted on March 29, 1946.

With the consent of the Government and the donors, the ICRC handled ten per cent of the goods sent to Czechoslovakia by the Swiss Relief Fund, and distributed them to the minorities interned in camps and awaiting their deportation to Germany. These camps were also supplied with two carloads of potatoes from the Bavarian Red Cross. Thereafter, it was felt wiser to wait until these minorities arrived in Germany before giving them the relief intended for them ¹.

§ 5. THE DODECANESE

During the month of December 1944, the ICRC received urgent appeals from the civil and religious authorities of the Dodecanese Islands, at that time occupied by the Germans, for aid to the inhabitants, who were in a desperate plight. Negotiations undertaken by various delegations of the ICRC with the belligerents led to an agreement in January 1945, whereby the British and German military commands authorised delegates of the ICRC, of Swiss nationality, to distribute relief in the Islands of Rhodos, Leros, Cos, Calymnos, Calchi and Pserimo, where the population was most severely affected. Izmir was chosen as the base, and the Turkish Government authorised the ICRC to charter the necessary caiques, or Levantine sailing vessels. These craft were required to wear the Turkish flag and be marked with the Red Cross emblem. The bulk of the food consignments were supplied free by British Middle East Command. At the request of the ICRC delegation in Cairo, the Greek Red Cross in London and Egypt, and the Greek Colony in Egypt bore the entire costs of this mission, particularly the freight charges. The Greek donations allowed the purchase of medical supplies and certain foodstuffs. Valuable

¹ See above pp. 387-389.

help was also given by the Red Cross Societies of Switzerland, South Africa and Australia, and by the Greek War Fund.

Once the thorny question of the sea-route had been settled, the ICRC delegate and five assistants, selected from the Swiss nationals resident in Turkey to supervise the distribution of the relief, left Izmir for the first trip on February 11, 1945, in charge of four caiques. Minefields and violent storms made this crossing a perilous undertaking, but the vessels reached their destination, and their cargoes were greeted by the population as heaven-sent gifts.

Unloading took a long time, as the inhabitants of the islands were so weakened by undernourishment that, even when fed, they were unable to work more than one hour a day. The death-rate had risen steeply everywhere; at the beginning of February 1945, it was somewhere between six and ten times over normal.

The occupation authorities, who were also in food difficulties, cooperated with the ICRC and offered them transport and storage space for the goods. They also facilitated the supervision and distribution of the relief.

While the delegates were in Rhodes, the Turkish Government declared war on Germany. This event almost ended the ICRC relief programme, since the boats were manned by Turkish crews and flew the Turkish colours. Nevertheless, the German commandant of the Dodecanese allowed the ICRC to continue its work, provided that the vessels were plainly marked with the Red Cross emblem. It was however very difficult, once the boats had returned to Turkey, to secure the permission of the authorities for another trip to the Dodecanese. They finally consented, after representations by the British military authorities and after they had noted the delegate's report on the food situation in the Islands.

On March 10, 1945, a second convoy, larger than the first, left Izmir for the Dodecanese; a third followed in April, and a fourth and last in May. By that time hostilities had ceased, but the British military authorities in charge of the Archipelago asked the Committee's delegate to continue the distribution of relief as before. In addition, at their suggestion also, the

ICRC sent a permanent delegate to Rhodes who continued to supervise the numerous shipments, sent either direct or through the Joint Relief Commission, until February 1946. This delegate was also able to place his experience at the service of the inhabitants of the Dodecanese.

From February to May 1945, 2,738 tons of food were distributed in the Islands, representing about 37 kilos per head. The following table gives the quantities, in kilos, distributed in each Island at each delivery :

Islands	Population	1st convoy (February)	2nd convoy (March)	3rd convoy (April)	4th convoy (May)	Total
Rhodes and Calchi . . .	49,200	236,669	533,226	582,127	554,218	1,906,240
Cos	16,400	—	185,476	134,992	159,643	480,111
Leros	4,200	30,660	41,559	39,953	45,953	158,125
Kalymnos & Pserimo	5,100	37,090	55,344	51,411	49,735	193,580
Total	74,900	304,419	815,605	808,483	809,549	2,728,056

As circumstances differed on each island, the delegates did not deliver the same amount of food everywhere. Distress was specially acute in the town of Rhodes, whereas Cos, the most agricultural island, was able to do without food relief until March.

A part of the gifts was set aside for soup kitchens and milk centres for children, which the delegates organized as soon as they arrived in the Dodecanese. More than 250,000 individual issues were made in Rhodes from February to May, 1945.

The relief supplies also included :

- 10 tons of medical supplies
- 1 case of iodine
- 100,000 quinine tablets
- 1,000 woollen blankets
- 12½ tons of soap
- 1 ton of cod-liver oil.

Part of these supplies were purchased in the Middle East with the funds from the Greek Red Cross and the Greek colony in Egypt; the remainder came from the Greek and South African Red Cross Societies and from the Greek colony in Egypt. In every island they were handed over to a medical commission for issue to hospitals and the sick.

After the liberation the remaining stocks of medical supplies were given to the British Army Medical Service, which shared them out, jointly with the delegate of the ICRC and a local relief committee, among the hospitals and the poor.

The Greek War Relief Fund transferred 440 tons of foodstuffs and 463 bales of clothing and shoes left in Cyprus, to the ICRC delegation in Cairo. These goods did not reach Rhodes until June 3; they were carried on one of the three vessels which made up the fourth convoy. As the food supply of the Islands was now maintained by the British Army, these goods were stored in the ICRC warehouses in Rhodes and distributed by the delegate to hospitals, charitable and educational institutions and to the needy.

The ICRC delegation in Cairo received the following gifts for the Dodecanese in 1945:

	<i>From</i>	<i>£E</i>
Jan. 12	Messrs S. Casulli, Alexandria	500.—
Jan. 13	The Greek Red Cross, Cairo	2,000.—
Jan. 17	The Léricots Fraternity, Alexandria . . .	1,000.—
March 1	The Greek Red Cross, London, through M. Mouratiadis	9,750.—
March 29	The Greek Patriarch, Alexandria	3,500.—
May 5	Messrs S. Casulli, Alexandria	1,000.—
May 14	The Dodecanese Fraternity, Alexandria ..	1,499.985
	<i>£E</i>	<u>19,249.985</u>

These funds were used to cover:

- (a) — The expenses of the mission in the Dodecanese;
- (b) — The purchase of goods;
- (c) — Freight charges;
- (d) — Travelling expenses of delegates in the Middle East;
- (e) — Direct costs borne by the ICRC (telegrams, insurance, etc.).

§ 6. FINLAND

Immediately war broke out between Finland and the Soviet Union, the ICRC made its usual offer to launch a general appeal on behalf of the Red Cross Societies of the two countries concerned. The Finnish Red Cross accepted, and within a very short time the ICRC was able to transmit ambulances, medical supplies and medicaments presented by the sister Societies. The ICRC made the customary notification when these ambulances were put into service.

On learning of the distress of the Finnish civilians who had fled from the fighting zones towards the interior of the country, the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies considered making a joint appeal in their behalf. As, however, only one of the belligerents was involved, the ICRC decided that they could not proceed unless explicitly asked to do so by the Finnish Red Cross. The latter organization, consulted by telegram on December 28, 1940, replied that they had already received adequate foreign relief in cash and in kind, but that they would not fail to apply to the ICRC at some future date, if the situation required it.

This refusal will be better understood if it is borne in mind that the Finnish Red Cross directed its efforts mainly to the sick and wounded combatants, while the care of civilian refugees was entrusted by the Finnish Government to a central committee, the "Suomen Huolto", on which the Finnish Red Cross and other welfare organizations were represented. This Committee indirectly informed the ICRC that relief shipments would be gratefully accepted : although the aid sent by America and Sweden was considerable, it was not sufficient to meet all the needs.

In these circumstances and for the reason already mentioned the proposed appeal was impracticable. But the ICRC did all it could to encourage spontaneous gifts, and was thus able to send the following supplies to the Finnish Red Cross, in addition to medical stores :

March : 621 kilos of chocolate for Finnish children ;

- April : 1,886 kilos of medicaments, calcium and chocolate, purchased with the proceeds of a collection made among Swiss doctors ;
- June : 1,550 kilos of underwear supplied by the Junior Swiss Relief Fund for Finland.

In compliance with the wishes of the Finnish Red Cross, which feared that transport difficulties might prevent the timely arrival of supplies, many Red Cross Societies and other organizations for aid to Finland also sent money remittances to the Finnish Red Cross through the ICRC.

When fighting between Finland and Soviet Russia ceased, relief continued without interruption ; from then on, goods were shipped by the Joint Relief Commission¹, while the ICRC arranged money transfers.

During the second Finnish-Soviet conflict, the Finnish Minister in Stockholm forwarded an appeal for relief by the Finnish Red Cross for the areas occupied by the Finnish army in Eastern Carelia, where about 85,000 Russian civilians were in very distressed circumstances. However, the ICRC obtained no reply either from the Soviet Government, whom they consulted through their delegate in Teheran, or from the British and American Governments, whose collaboration was requested for the dispatch of goods and money. As, moreover, the Swiss and Swedish Red Cross Societies were unable to contribute financially, the scheme had to be abandoned.

§ 7. FRANCE

The invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and France by the Wehrmacht led to the exodus of millions of the inhabitants of those countries, who fled before the crushing advance of the enemy and sought refuge in the south of France. This mass influx of refugees, who frequently had no more than the barest necessities with them, confronted the authorities and the French Red Cross with a colossal task, for which their own immediate resources were inadequate.

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

The ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, in agreement with the French authorities, therefore sent the following telegram on May 29, 1940 to the national Red Cross Societies of the neutral and non-belligerent countries :

" Some three million French, two million Belgian, seventy thousand Luxemburg and fifty thousand Dutch refugees or evacuees are in a serious state of destitution in France. The French Red Cross appeals to sister Societies for relief of people in distress. Needs are new clothes, shoes, layettes, bedding, kitchen utensils, minor surgical instruments, dressings, non-perishable foods, collapsible huts, textiles for workshops. Please send gifts in cash or kind to Central Committee French Red Cross Paris and through Véron transport agent for all ports ".

Several replies were made to Geneva. The Argentine Red Cross Committee notified a gift from the French Relief Committee in Buenos Aires of 50 tons of clothing. The Turkish Red Crescent promised 500 tons of wheat ¹. The Greek Red Cross sent 125,000 French francs for the French Red Cross. Other National Societies sent their gifts direct to the French Red Cross, at the same time notifying the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies. Those gifts included : 150,000 levas from the Bulgarian Red Cross ; 100,800 French francs given by the Egyptian Red Crescent to the French Minister in Cairo ; and 50,000 dinars, together with a quantity of non-perishable foodstuffs to a value of 250,000 dinars, from the Yugoslav Red Cross.

It was proposed to launch a relief drive in all the Latin American States, with the support of the Foreign Minister of each country. There was also a generous response to the joint appeal in the United States ; the U.S. Government allocated 50 million dollars, and the American Red Cross 20 million dollars. These sums were to be used for the relief of refugees and war victims in Europe, under the supervision of the American Red Cross representatives. Unfortunately, the hopes

¹ The ICRC was involved in long negotiations in order to obtain free carriage and exemption from customs duties for this shipment. When, finally, in the beginning of 1941, the agreement of all the interested parties had been secured, the economic situation of the country had changed and the Turkish Government was obliged to refuse the Red Crescent an export licence.

which the ICRC and the League had placed in the help from North and South America were dashed, as the Allied blockade¹ prohibited any food or clothing being sent to the civilian population in the countries occupied by, or subjected to the Axis.

Without waiting for the result of the appeal of May 29, the ICRC consulted the German occupation authorities on the details of the proposed relief action. The German Government sent a representative of one of its leading welfare organizations to Geneva, who asked for Red Cross help for the refugees in France.

As a result of these conversations, two wagons, containing twenty tons of condensed milk supplied by the ICRC, and five wagons containing 33 tons of good and clothing from the Swiss Red Cross, were sent to the areas in question. The urgency of the situation was such that an exception was made to the usual procedure and the shipments were distributed by the relief organizations that happened to be on the spot ; arrangements were later made for an ICRC delegate to be present, on delivery of the relief consignments. In July 1940, two members of the ICRC went on mission to Berlin and exchanged views with the German authorities, who finally agreed that the official representative of the ICRC in Paris should have a certain discretion in the distribution of relief sent to France².

During the summer and autumn of 1940 the ICRC sent numerous consignments to the French Red Cross, the refugee camps and the children's reception centres; the persons in charge supervised the distribution and sent receipts to Geneva. The consignments were addressed to the representative of the German Red Cross, who passed them on to the French Red Cross, and they consequently travelled carriage and duty free.

The ICRC in this way sent the following supplies to France :

August, 1940: 70 tons of food and clothing (various donors in Switzerland);
45 tons of food (Yugoslav Red Cross);

¹ See pp. 368 et seq.

² It was not until September 1943 that the German authorities recognised this agent as an officially accredited delegate of the ICRC.

Sept. 1940 : 283 tons of condensed and dried milk (Swiss Red Cross) ;

Oct. to Dec. 1940 : 676 tons of foodstuffs } various sources
34 tons of clothing }

Early 1941 : 55 tons of food for the Swiss Aid Mission to the Children of Toulouse.

All subsequent shipments were made through the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, which was then beginning to function ¹.

Although the efforts of the authorities and the French Red Cross led to the early repatriation of many refugees, the food situation in France required the continued shipment of goods. The French National Relief Committee was set up by decree on October 4, 1940, to deal centrally with all applications for relief. It was also the sole body authorised to make appeals to public generosity.

From 1941 onwards, the supply of relief to France was settled by direct negotiation between this National Committee and the Joint Relief Commission. Nevertheless, the ICRC's mediation remained indispensable for solving the numerous problems which arose in connection with the relief sent to camps in Southern France ².

During the summer of 1943, another problem demanded the intervention of the ICRC. The provisioning of Corsica depended to a large extent on imports. When the Allies landed in Italy the food situation of the island was seriously affected, for several food ships which the French Government had despatched were sunk as the result of enemy action. A delegate of the French Red Cross suggested that the ICRC should organize the supply of Corsica with French ships, ceded by the Government to the Foundation for Red Cross Transports. It was proposed to send 3,000 tons of food per month, half of it in the form of flour. As these goods were to be sent from metropolitan French territory, there would be no infringement of the blockade

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

² See below pp. 525 et seq.

regulations. However, when this scheme was submitted to the belligerents, the ICRC was told that "for military reasons" no safe-conducts could be granted. The plan to help Corsica had therefore to be abandoned.

After the Allied landing in France and during the subsequent fighting, the ICRC delegates were cut off from Geneva and were obliged to make decisions on the spot.

Thus, the ICRC delegate in Paris, realising that the reserves of flour to feed the capital were stored 50 kilometres outside Paris and that the city might thus be without bread, possibly for weeks, secured the consent of the Germans, who were still in command of the capital, to the immediate use of 80 lorries and buses, which had already been dismantled to make them useless for the German troops. The vehicles left Paris on August 23, 1944, but on reaching Melun after a roundabout journey, the silos were found to be in flames. The convoy then proceeded to Verneuil-l'Etang, whence 200 tons of flour were conveyed to Paris. Another attempt was made the following day, but the convoy was halted after a few miles, because the licenses issued by the Germans were no longer recognised. The Committee's delegate was even arrested, but managed to escape and conduct all the lorries safely back to Paris. The next day the capital was liberated, and no further trips were needed.

Thanks to the Committee's relations with an unofficial agent of the French Provisional Government, relief schemes for the towns and areas freed by the advancing Allied forces were greatly facilitated. On September 1, 1944, it was decided to send a first emergency relief consignment to the town of Lyons; a train was put at the disposal of the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission by the Swiss Government, and despatched loaded with milk products. The German Consul-General in Geneva had sanctioned the routing of this train across areas which the Germans did not yet regard as liberated, and the journey to Lyons and back was effected without incident. As the liberation proceeded, requests for help poured into Geneva, as the mass destruction of houses, roads and railways, coupled with the absence of transport, had impaired the provisioning of entire Departments.

Although the ICRC had long since made plans for post-war relief, the elements of the problem changed as the war drew to an end. The welfare organizations, both official and voluntary, were again able to act independently of a neutral intermediary, the work of which was based primarily on the principle of reciprocity.

Nevertheless, France was not yet completely freed, since certain points on the Atlantic coast remained under German occupation until the armistice.

"Pockets" on the Atlantic Coast.

When France was liberated in the summer of 1944, the German garrisons in the ports of Dunkerque, La Rochelle, Royan, Lorient and Saint Nazaire were surrounded by the Allied forces; these areas were consequently separated from the remainder of the country by unbroken fronts. In the autumn, local truces enabled part of the population to be transferred to liberated France. A great many of the inhabitants refused, however, to leave their native soil, and as the war continued, their position became increasingly serious.

In January 1945, the Chargé d'Affaires of the French Embassy in Berne asked the ICRC, at the request of the Commissioner of the Republic in Angers, to examine the possibility of sending a delegate to Saint Nazaire, to distribute the relief supplies which the French authorities proposed to forward to some 120,000 people living in and around the city. In addition, the German authorities asked the ICRC to send a representative into the Atlantic "pockets", especially to La Rochelle, to organize the provisioning of the town and of the Islands of Ré and Oléron.

The Committee agreed to do so. As soon as the consent of the belligerents was secured, a delegation left Geneva on January 19 to study the situation on the spot. On the grounds of their investigations and the promise given by the German occupying authorities not to requisition the supplies, the French and United States military authorities allowed a train to leave for Saint Nazaire, conveying 600 tons of foodstuffs and medica-

ments. The train arrived at its destination on February 17, after a truce had been concluded and the rails which had been torn up by the belligerents across the "no man's land" had been replaced. The French local authorities distributed the relief supplies under the supervision of the Committee's delegates.

Consequent to the favourable reports received from these delegates on the outcome of their mission, three other relief trains conveyed the following supplies to Saint Nazaire :

On March 15 :

- 60 tons of sugar
- 10 " " butter
- 3½ " " coffee
- 345 " " flour
- 1 wagonload of relief supplies. Given by the National Relief Fund (*Secours national*)
- 1 wagon of relief supplies. Given by the *Gendarmerie maritime* and the Harbour Fire Service
- 1,000 litres of petrol and oil, for civilian physicians in the area.

On April 10 :

- 350 tons of flour
- 60 " " sugar
- 30 " " tinned meat
- 20 " " dried vegetables
- 10 " " butter
- 100 " " potatoes
- 1 ton of Phoscao
- 1 ton of malted milk
- 5 tons of miscellaneous stores, given by the French Red Cross
- 15 " " given by the *Entr'aide française*
- 935 kilos of seed ;

On April 21 :

- 350 tons of flour
- 15 " " soap
- 10 " " potatoes
- 5 " " butter
- 10 " " noodles, macaroni, etc.
- 2 " " tinned meat
- 1,000 litres of petrol, for civilian physicians ;

60 tons of seed potatoes

1 lot of miscellaneous relief supplies, given by the *Entr'aide française*.

These further consignments were distributed in the same ways as the first. The delegates of the ICRC often had to cross the firing lines to arrange for these deliveries. While doing so they visited the Allied PW, some of whom were exchanged at the instance of the ICRC. The delegates also reported that medicaments and hospital equipment were required for the German wounded and sick in Saint Nazaire. Permission was obtained from the French authorities to forward a consignment to the enemy field hospitals through France, and the ICRC informed the German authorities that it would purchase medicaments and hospital material on receipt of funds from Germany. As communications between Berlin and the German Consulate in Geneva had been cut, the German authorities' answer did not arrive before the capitulation of the Reich. The proposed scheme was therefore abandoned.

The ICRC also contemplated chartering a neutral vessel which would carry supplies under the Red Cross emblem to La Rochelle and the Islands of Ré and Oléron. This proposal was approved by the belligerents. However, a local truce during the negotiations themselves enabled relief to be sent overland. These supplies were distributed with the help of the representatives of the Swedish Red Cross, who also co-operated in supplying food to Royan.

As Dunkerque had been almost entirely evacuated, the Allied military authorities declined to authorise relief supplies for the few inhabitants who had refused to leave the town. The delegate of the ICRC therefore confined himself to visiting the Allied PW camps and issuing relief there. He also visited the French civilians who had remained and were quartered in a part of the town that was still standing. This mission was a particularly dangerous one, for to reach the German outposts the delegate had to cross a mined stretch of "no man's land". The three tons of relief supplies for Allied PW followed the same route, and were carried through the mine-field by 200 German soldiers.

About 9,000 inhabitants had remained in Lorient. Reports stated that their food situation was alarming, as the German garrison had been cut off in the month of August 1944, since when no bread, potatoes or sugar had been issued. Having succeeded in crossing the firing lines, an ICRC delegate noted the requirements of the population and the means of access which were still open. Upon the strength of his report, the Allies agreed that the town should be supplied with food by a vessel furnished by the German authorities at Lorient. This vessel carried the Committee's markings and was manned by a French crew. The commander of the German garrison announced that any German soldier guilty of looting the supplies would be shot ; he also gave an undertaking that the distribution of the food and medicaments should be carried out under the supervision of the Committee's delegate. As all the civilian doctors had been evacuated from the Lorient area, the ICRC sent a Swiss doctor into the town to organise a relief distribution scheme, and to give medical attention to the inhabitants.

The *Carentan* left Vannes under safe-conduct, on April 14, 1945, and arrived on the following day at Port Louis, in the southern area of the Lorient pocket, where half of the supplies were unloaded. On April 16 she sailed to the northern area, to unload the remainder of her cargo. After negotiations by the delegates, the Allied artillery fire, which had exposed the ship to some danger in the southern area, was stopped until her return to Vannes.

This first consignment included :

47 ½	tons of flour
9	tons of sugar
70	tons of potatoes
3,000	cases of matches
2,920	pairs of shoes and slippers
8	cases of medicaments, given by the French Red Cross.

The *Carentan* made a second trip on May 8, the day on which the German garrison surrendered. At the request of the French and United States military authorities, the delegate once more distributed the relief stores, which comprised :

25	tons of flour
5	tons of salt
50	tons of potatoes
4 1/2	tons of tinned meat
750	kilos of soap
26	bales of clothing, given by the French Red Cross
1	consignment of medicaments and surgical instruments, given by the French Red Cross
1	consignment of miscellaneous relief (condensed milk, malted milk, etc.) given by the <i>Entr'aide française</i> .

The United States military authorities warmly congratulated the Committee on the manner in which their delegates had carried out their mission. The Prefect of the Loire Inférieure also expressed his gratitude to the Committee, on behalf of the population of Saint Nazaire.

§ 8. GERMANY

The difficulties that arose in connexion with the relief of the population of the defeated countries were especially marked in the case of Germany. This was due to her dominant position in the Axis and the particularly grave consequences of her defeat ¹.

For this reason, a detailed account will be given of the Committee's negotiations with the four occupying Powers for authority to send relief from private sources to civilians in that country. During the period of confusion which followed the collapse of the *Wehrmacht*, the ICRC carried out its relief work for released Allied PW and the Allied detainees who had escaped from concentration camps ². Similarly, the Joint Relief Commission, the Committee's road transport organization and various Swiss and Swedish associations were instrumental in giving intermittent assistance to the population, but this was not expressly authorized by the occupying Authorities and was only approved by the local military commanders.

¹ See above p. 387.

² See above pp. 96 et seq.

As soon as the armistice was signed, appeals from private individuals and organizations called the attention of the ICRC to the tragic fate of the population of Germany. Numerous demands for relief also came through the delegations, or in messages brought out of Germany by underground channels and posted in Switzerland. The hospitals lacked medical supplies of daily use, and those local branches of the Red Cross which had not been wound up were powerless for want of material resources. The official rations often did not exceed 1,000 calories a day, and even these could not always be obtained, because of the lack of reserve stocks on the market. Areas that had already been overpopulated by the influx of refugees from the air bombardment of the West, or by the exodus from the East during the winter of 1944, were burdened anew by the tens of thousands expelled from Czechoslovakia, Silesia, Pomerania and Hungary. The ruined railway stations served as camps for the refugees who, especially in the Soviet zone, wandered from station to station, as they found trains, often only to land once more at the point from which they had set out, or in the Berlin area. The central German Government had been swept away, taking with it the main services of the German Red Cross and of all the welfare organizations which, voluntarily or not, had supported the regime. Only a few Church institutions and local branches of the Red Cross remained. Abroad, those Germans who might have been able to help their country were themselves called upon, at least in law, to bear the consequences of defeat. There was, in fact, little or no opportunity of their setting up any relief organization, except in neutral countries such as Switzerland, where several committees were formed in the months following the armistice.

A number of charitable organizations asked the ICRC to obtain authority to despatch material and thus to enable them to meet the essential needs of a great many German cities, hospitals, homes, and welfare societies. In the early weeks, this voluntary activity met with few obstacles, but as soon as the occupation was placed on an organized basis, the Allied authorities desired to be informed in advance of any relief work that was contemplated.

At the end of the summer of 1945, a special delegate of the ICRC contacted the four Allied Staff Headquarters¹. Whilst awaiting the result of the negotiations which ensued, various donors urged that there should be no cessation of voluntary aid. Consequently, in December 1945, although the official consent of the central authorities of the American zone had not been received, the Swiss Relief Fund started what was known as the "Ten Towns" relief, which distributed additional calories to one thousand children for one hundred days in each of the German areas selected.

Some of these towns were in the American Zone, and it was planned to send huts to Munich, for use as dispensaries and canteens. The municipal authorities of Munich had, with the consent of the Town Commandant, barely erected these huts, when the U.S. authorities in the Zone decided that the aid of the Swiss Relief Fund should not at once be accepted. In answer to an appeal by the ICRC, an exception was made for Munich and the order was rescinded in January 1946 in respect of this town. Nevertheless, on the advice of the ICRC, the relief operations were postponed in order not to jeopardize the negotiations. These did, in fact, result in a general agreement on March 1 for the Zone as a whole; the text of this document is given below.

As soon as the requisite agreements with the municipal authorities of Berlin and with each of the four Zones had been formally concluded, the ICRC was able to play its full part as an intermediary. The permanent delegations in each Zone, acting under the general supervision of the Special Delegation in Berlin, were called upon for daily duties which were often very heavy, as the agreement in principle could only be applied after repeated negotiations. The delegations had, for instance, to obtain transport facilities, to secure priority for a set-train sent by the Joint Relief Commission to travel over lines still closed to civilian traffic, to find warehouses and watchmen, to accommodate the escort agents and secure permission for them to stay in a country where foreigners were not yet willingly

¹ See above p. 389.

admitted, to gain the confidence of the military authorities in charge of welfare services, and to make sure that the German distributing agencies were able to carry on the work. Finally, it was necessary to reassure and encourage the donors, to supervise distributions, and to obtain reports on the subject—often no easy matter.

The delegations of the ICRC also collaborated with foreign institutions, in particular with the teams of the Swedish Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss Relief Fund. In its capacity as neutral intermediary, the ICRC was often able to distribute work in such a way as to avoid interruptions and overlapping.

Agreement with the Occupation Authorities

The negotiations undertaken in 1945 by the Special Delegate were concluded almost simultaneously in the British Zone, in Berlin and in the French Zone. Agreement with the American and Soviet Zones took longer.

British Zone.

In the British Zone a plan for co-operation was drawn up on October 30, 1945, between the ICRC and the head of the British Red Cross, Civilian Relief Units.

This agreement reads :

(1) — Relief action in favour of the German population which the ICRC or other humanitarian organizations working together with the ICRC undertake within the British Occupation Zone of Germany will be planned and executed in collaboration with the B.R.C. Civilian Relief Unit working in this zone.

(2) — The relief actions might include :

(a) — Help to the settled German population (medical supplies, medical missions, child welfare, including the supply of clothes and food).

(b) — Help to the refugee population entering the British Zone (medical supplies, medical missions and supply of food and textiles to transit or permanent refugee camps).

(3) — The transport of supplies from Switzerland into the British Zone will be executed by lorries. Petrol and oil should be supplied by the military authorities of the Zone which the convoys cross or enter. In a later stage, the possibility of railway transports might be discussed.

(4) — For distribution, the German relief organizations recognized by the British authorities will be used by the ICRC or the organizations with which it works. For this purpose, the transport of the B.R.C. sections can be made available.

(5) — These distributions take place under the supervision of a delegate of the ICRC, or of an organization working with it, or by delegates of both.

The competent authorities of the Military Government of the British Occupation Zone agree with the outlines of this proposal between the ICRC and the B.R.C., Civilian Relief Units, in the British Occupation Zone.

For the ICRC: (Sgd.): Dr. A. H. LINDT.

For the B.R.C., Civilian Relief Units: (Sgd.): Colonel AGNEW.

Vlotho, October 30, 1945.

This text was approved by the Deputy Military Governor of the British Zone on November 6, 1945. Moreover, the Military Government granted the following additional terms:

- (a) — The Military Authorities supplied the ICRC with petrol and oil for the lorries carrying civilian relief to the British Zone. Military garages were available and repairs could be carried out at the expense of the British forces.
- (b) — The British Military Government undertook to provide the drivers and other persons in charge of consignments with permits to enter Germany.

City of Berlin.

In November 1945, the delegate of the ICRC proposed that relief work should be organized for the City of Berlin. As the Joint Relief Commission had received supplies from the Swiss Relief Fund and the Irish Donation, he was able to submit to the Allied authorities a detailed programme providing for a daily addition to the food rations of 1,000 children for three months, and for the distribution of medica-

ments, blankets, bed-sheets and sugar to various institutions. Recognizing the value of this offer, the Interallied Command instructed the Health Sub-Committee, under the chairmanship of a Russian officer, to examine it in conjunction with the delegate. The plan was accepted and the ICRC was authorized to establish a delegation in Berlin. The Sub-Committee's decision was taken on November 26. The four Allied heads of the Berlin sectors met on December 3, and after some amendments, the minutes of their meeting were transmitted to the delegate as follows :

The Inter-Allied Command :

I. Has approved the document below with the following amendments :

- (a) — Substitute "see to" for "supervise".
- (b) — Add the following at the end of par. 3 :
"The Public Health Committee will supply a monthly report to the Commandants or their deputies on the distribution of relief given by the Red Cross."

II. Has directed that the suggestion contained in par. 4 be submitted to the Co-ordination Committee of the Allied Control Council.

Decision taken by the Public Health Committee on November 26, 1945.

(1) — To accept the supplies offered by the International Red Cross for the relief of the sick and the children of Berlin.

(2) — To transmit all supplies to the Public Health Section of the Berlin Administration for distribution to the hospitals and children's institutions *in all sectors* of the city.

(3) — To allow the representative of the Red Cross to be present at the distributions. Supervision will, in future, be carried out by the Red Cross on the basis of enquiries made by the Public Health Section.

(4) — To submit to the Commandants proposals regarding the transport of supplies from Switzerland to Berlin. Transport should be carried out preferably by rail, which would enable the whole delivery to be made in one operation.

(5) — To permit M. Lindt to consult the Public Health Section on the subject of the medical supplies most needed in Berlin.

(Signatures of the representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and France.)

Allied Kommandatura Berlin

December 5, 1945.

Subject: Red Cross Issue for Berlin.

To: Dr. Lindt, International Red Cross.

(1) — The Allied Kommandatura Berlin agreed on December 3 to accept the generous offer of the International Red Cross of an issue of food and medicine for the sick and children of Berlin. Further, representatives of the Red Cross may attend the distribution of the supplies.

(2) — Attached hereto is a copy of letter forwarded to the Travel Security Board concerning Travel Permits for two of your representatives.

ALLIED KOMMANDATURA BERLIN.

On December 6, 1945, the Co-ordination Committee of the Allied Control Council approved the decision of the Berlin Command. And — of particular importance for the continued work of the ICRC in Germany — it also stated that the admission of representatives of relief organizations would be decided by the Command Authorities in Berlin and by the Military Governor in each Zone.

French Zone.

Negotiations in respect of the French Zone resulted in an agreement with the Military Governor on December 7, 1945, in the following terms :

(1) — The relief work of the ICRC and of humanitarian organizations collaborating with it, for sick persons and children in the French Zone of occupation in Germany, shall be planned and carried out in co-operation with the French Military Authorities.

(2) — Relief work may include :

(a) — Aid to the German population permanently domiciled in the zone, such as medical supplies, medical missions, food and clothing for children.

(b) — Aid to German refugees entering the French Zone of occupation (medical supplies, medical missions, food and clothing for children).

The aid shall be distributed either in the reception centres or in the permanent refugee camps.

(3) — It is intended that transport shall be by rail, if possible at the expense of the French Military Authorities. Goods may be taken by lorry to the nearest station to the Swiss frontier.

(4) — For the distribution of relief, the ICRC, or the humanitarian organizations collaborating with it shall make use of the German relief organizations recognized by the French Military Authorities.

(5) — Relief schemes shall be supervised by a delegate of the ICRC or of a humanitarian organization collaborating with it, or by delegates of both.

(6) — The ICRC shall give special consideration to the Saar District.
Baden-Baden, December 7, 1945.

(Sgd.) General KOENIG.

As in the British Zone, relief could be given to the refugees and to the population permanently domiciled there. Authority was given for the establishment of a delegation of the ICRC.

American Zone.

In the American Zone, negotiations were less rapid. The occupation authorities had to settle highly complex demographic problems, which doubtless had a political aspect.

The delegate of the ICRC made a definite offer to give aid to the German refugees, whose situation was far more precarious than that of the population permanently domiciled in that zone; this would include medical attention, food supplies and clothing. However, the U.S. military authorities informed the ICRC that public opinion in the United States would not yet allow private organizations to give relief to the German population, at a time when the U.S. Government was itself sending large quantities of cereals to its zone of occupation. It was only at the beginning of January, 1946, that the U.S. Government allowed their military authorities in Germany to open the zone to voluntary relief. It was laid down that the donors should form two groups, one for relief from the United States and the other for relief coming from or through Switzerland. The ICRC, whose delegation represented the Joint Relief Commission in occupied Germany, was prepared, at

least for a certain time, to co-ordinate the consignments of the second group. An agreement in principle was concluded in Berlin on February 4, 1946, between U.S. General Staff Headquarters and the Special Delegate of the Committee. After approval by the ICRC, it came into force in the form of instructions issued by the Welfare Section of the Military Government in Germany. The Memorandum on this agreement reads as follows :

MEMORANDUM

Subject : *Relief Operations by the ICRC acting for Non-American Voluntary Agencies.*

It is understood that several non-American voluntary relief agencies wish to send into Germany relief supplies for the benefit of German nationals. These agencies wish to designate the ICRC as their agents for the import of these supplies.

The OMGUS¹ is prepared to receive in Germany the following kinds of essential goods :

Condensed, evaporated, powdered milk ; fats ; sugar or dextrose ; soap ; cod-liver oil ; clothing, especially shoes ; medicines ; recreational supplies ; school supplies, etc.

The following memorandum will serve as a basis for procedure in accordance with the above understanding.

Transport.

Relief goods will be called for by the Military Government. Transport of relief goods called for will be provided by the Military Government from points of entry designated by it to the cities of distributions.

Allocation and Distribution.

The allocation of all these supplies to areas and, in the case of undesignated goods, to agencies, shall be done by German public welfare officials under the orders of the Military Government (Welfare Section OMGUS).

The Central German Committee and German public welfare officials shall recommend to the American Military Government (Welfare Section OMGUS) the supplies which are to be called for by the American Military Government from the voluntary agencies represented by the ICRC.

¹ = Office of the Military Government of the United States.

Liaison Personnel.

The ICRC Special Delegate for Relief Actions in Germany will serve as a liaison agent to the American Military Government to facilitate arrangements for the import and distribution of supplies. In this capacity the Special Delegate will be directly responsible to the Chief of the Welfare Section OMGUS and will furnish reports to the ICRC and to the Military Government.

Authority to engage in activities relative to the distribution of these supplies in the U.S. Zone may be given to personnel of the ICRC or the voluntary agencies furnishing relief supplies only by the ICRC Special Delegate for Relief Actions in Germany, who may delegate this responsibility to the Chief Delegate of the ICRC in Frankfurt.

In his letter of March 4, 1946, the Chief of the Welfare Section clearly stated that his Section should be informed in advance of any plans for importing relief supplies into the American zone, since the approval of U.S. Staff Headquarters was necessary for all consignments. The local branches of the German Red Cross, the Catholic "Caritas", the Protestant "Evangelisches Hilfswerk" (Evangelical Aid) and the workers' organization "Arbeiter-Wohlfahrt" (Workers' Welfare) were authorized to carry out the distribution in collaboration. The Central German Committee was composed of representatives of these four societies and had its headquarters at Stuttgart, to which town, after November, 1946, all consignments had to be sent, or at least notified.

In April, 1946, the Military Government, which was no longer able to place its own transport at the disposal of the Joint Relief Commission, requested the ICRC and the American committee CRALOG¹ to arrange for convoys themselves at the expense of the German Authorities².

At the same time it was felt that one of the four organizations chosen by the donors could in the future be made responsible for the delivery of supplies, as the German Central Committee alone was competent to designate the region most urgently in need of relief.

¹ Council of Relief Agencies Licensed for Operations in Germany.

² For the organization of convoys and reimbursement of transport charges, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Soviet Zone.

During this period negotiations with the Russian Military Command were also proceeding satisfactorily. On February 8, 1946, the Special Delegate of the ICRC was informed that the said Government intended to authorize the Committee to extend its activities to the Soviet Zone, and to Brandenburg in particular. The Russian officers, in a very practical spirit, asked the ICRC to prove to them, by making definite proposals, that relief passing through their hands would contribute materially to relieve the distress of refugee children in the Soviet Zone. They stated that at the beginning of the year there were 1,200,000 German refugee children in that zone, and that 60,000 of these were sick or undernourished. If the ICRC was in a position to give aid to at least a considerable proportion of these children, access to the Zone would be granted.

The Committee had already demonstrated what it could achieve, after the Inter-Allied Command's decision of December 3, 1945, by sending two complete block-trains of relief to Berlin within the space of two months. The prompt despatch of these consignments, delivered to the Joint Relief Commission, and their source testified to the value and complete impartiality of such aid. The ICRC adopted the same procedure for the Soviet Zone, and asked for support from the Swiss Relief Fund and the Irish Donation, the World Council of Churches, the International Union for Child Welfare, "Caritas", the American Friends Service Committee, and others. In March, the Special Delegate was able to submit proposals to the Russian Military Command. The latter at first planned to limit the aid of the ICRC to the Russian suburbs of Berlin, although providing for all children in need, whether refugee or not. However, the United Front of the Communist, Socialist, Christian-Socialist and Democratic-Liberal parties, on a proposal by the Communist and Socialist parties, suggested that the Russian Command should appeal for aid from abroad for the distressed population, not only of Berlin, but also of Brandenburg. The Special Delegate then submitted a plan to the military authorities, and on April 13, 1946, the Chief of Staff of the Soviet Military Admi-

nistration in Germany granted the authority applied for. His message reads as follows :

U.S.S.R.

General Staff of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany—
Section for Transfer of Populations.

Berlin, April 13, 1946, No. 118.

To : Dr. Lindt, Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Soviet Military Administration in Germany expresses its gratitude to the ICRC for the relief it has given to the sick and destitute children in the Soviet Sector of Berlin.

With regard to your proposal for the extension of this relief to the sick and destitute children in the territory of the whole Soviet Zone of occupation, we consider that the following arrangement should be adopted :

(1) — All goods from the ICRC will be consigned to the German Administration for the Transfer of German Populations in the Soviet Zone, in Berlin.

(2) — Goods will be allocated by a Commission set up for this purpose and working under the German Administration for the Transfer of German Populations ; this Commission shall consist of representatives of the four anti-Fascist Parties, assisted by representatives of the Women's Committee and of the Free German Trade Union (FDGB). Later, representatives of other German democratic organizations will, if necessary, be admitted to the Commission.

The Commission shall be accountable for the receipt, the storage, and the proper allocation of all consignments from the ICRC for the Soviet Zone ; it will be responsible to the representatives of the ICRC for the use made of the goods received.

(3) — The ICRC, should there be any complaint of improper use of goods of foodstuffs received, will be entitled to refer to the representatives of the Soviet Military Administration ; this body will direct and supervise the work of this Commission set up for the proper distribution to sick persons and children of the Red Cross relief supplies.

I should be glad if you would inform me personally of your opinion in this matter.

(Sgd.) Lieutenant-General DRATVINE.
Chief of Staff of the Soviet
Military Administration in Germany.

Consignments made by the ICRC could be delivered not only in Brandenburg, but in the whole of the Soviet Zone. As the Russian message implied, the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) and the Evangelical Welfare Society were admitted to the Distribution Committee, set up on May 18. The delegates of the ICRC were in direct contact with the German Committee. The Military Government decided to take all necessary steps to ensure that the relief actually reached the sick, the children and those in distress. The letter of April 13 did not specifically authorize the delegates of the ICRC to attend distributions, but they could, in fact, visit the Russian zone for the purpose, as required. Moreover, reports kept the Committee in Geneva fully informed regarding the progress of distribution.

This joint undertaking sometimes gave rise to difficulties in the Soviet Zone, as it did in the other zones in Germany, and in other countries where the ICRC carried on relief work. In this post-war period there was a constant divergence between the specified wishes of the donors and the desire of the ICRC and the public authorities to allow, as far as possible, only relief that was truly for all in need, without discrimination.

Where the donors specify that their gifts shall be sent to some particular category of the population chosen, not solely on account of their needs, but in part from religious or political consideration, it is difficult to decide how far such wishes can be complied with. Gifts to a particular group are admissible if it is persecuted because of its religious or political character; they are not, however, allowable when the inhabitants of a district are all subject to the same jurisdiction. Nevertheless, if the wishes of donors are not taken into account, then their gifts may cease, and neither the ICRC nor the authorities of the receiving countries wished to take this responsibility. The Committee therefore had no other recourse but compromise, and endeavour to make up for relief of limited applications with a large number of special issues, or large-scale general supplies ¹.

¹ See above p. 394 and p. 399.

During 1946, the Military Government of the Soviet zone came to the conclusion that the Commission named in the above letter was paying too much attention to the donors' wishes and was not insisting strictly enough on the principle of allocation according to need. Negotiations took place between the military authorities, the Commission, the German Refugee Administration and the delegation of the ICRC. As it was held that the Allocation Commission was responsible both to the donors and the public authorities, it was decided to send the gifts to the homes, hospitals and other institutions specified by the donors, unless these organizations were receiving relief in excess. Moreover, establishments aided by private relief would only have a limited share of the general allocations. However, the ICRC and the Military Authorities both desired that all consignments should be directed to the Allocation Commission. On several occasions, difficulties had been caused by the despatch of semi-collective consignments addressed by name to religious, racial or political groups. Sometimes the consignors would not agree to their gifts being used for a common purpose; the Berlin delegation was then called upon to mediate. Relief consignments which gave rise to controversy represented, however, only five per cent of the total.

System of Import Licences for Germany.

At the beginning of 1946, customs regulations for goods entering Germany became necessary. Since the French Zone comprised all the territory along the German-Swiss frontier, the ICRC had to deal mainly with the French authorities, whether the goods were consigned to the French Zone, or sent in transit to the other zones.

In January 1946, the offices responsible for trade and finance in the French occupation zone announced that in future imports of any kind would require permits in accordance with the usual customs procedure. It was estimated that the time required for the examination of each application would be about six weeks. However, on January 12, 1946, the Director-

general for Trade and Finance authorized the ICRC to sign way-bills in respect of relief consignments for which it was responsible ; these took the place of the import licence. The Committee could exercise this right not only in respect of its own consignments, but also of relief from organizations working with it. It thus had a general contract for the duty-free import of all consignments for which it was responsible.

Although the ICRC was appreciative of the trust placed in it by the French occupation authorities, this arrangement had a disadvantage in that it gave the ICRC an import monopoly contrary to its policy of the open door. Other shippers, true, could import goods into Germany, but only under the normal commercial import procedure. They had moreover no exemption from customs duties and transport charges, such as that enjoyed by all consignments registered as part of the ICRC import quota. In June 1946, the Committee therefore supported an application from various international associations with headquarters in Switzerland, who desired to receive privileges similar to those which the ICRC enjoyed. However, the French authorities were unable to meet this request to the extent desired by these associations. It was not until the second half of 1947 that an organization having no connection with the ICRC received the right to send into the French Zone relief supplies coming from or through Switzerland, without having recourse to the Committee as intermediary.

In signing the customs declarations enabling relief supplies to enter immediately and free of duty, the ICRC became responsible for the way in which the goods were distributed. It therefore gave such a declaration only in respect of consignments over which it could exercise supervision, which obliged it to ask donors to use the services of the Joint Relief Commission. After that Commission had been wound up, the ICRC continued to give its signature and its stamp for consignments which were sent under the auspices of the two organizations that succeeded it : the Relief Bureau of the League of Red Cross Societies, and the International Relief Centre for Civil Populations.

§ 9. GREAT BRITAIN (CHANNEL ISLANDS)

In June 1940, the German forces occupied the British Channel Islands (Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney and Sark). Before the war, living conditions in these islands off the west coast of Normandy were similar to those in rural areas in the United Kingdom. In 1942, the number of inhabitants had dropped from 96,000 to about 65,000, many having been taken to the civilian internment camps in Germany. The Island of Alderney was completely emptied.

At the request of the Home Office, the ICRC began in August 1940 to enquire into the food situation in the Islands. Various reports stated that the rations were the same as in occupied France.

With the permission of the German Government, the ICRC used a gift of 25,000 Swiss francs from the Swiss Red Cross to send 261 cases of food and pharmaceutical products to the Islands. On March 29, 1941, the Bailiff of Jersey acknowledged the receipt of the consignment, stating that the recipients would be the injured, sick children and infants, and that a suitable quantity had been handed over to the Controlling Committee of Guernsey, which sent a receipt on March 31, 1941.

In a note dated April 10, 1941, the British Red Cross informed the ICRC of the pharmaceutical supplies required by the population. The Committee then repeatedly conferred with the Swiss authorities on the possibility of exporting the medical supplies listed by the B.R.C. Such export was possible only if the British Government compensated by importing British goods into Switzerland, and the ICRC instructed its delegation in London accordingly. The principle of compensation was accepted by the Ministry of Economic Warfare on July 17, and the details were settled by a member of the ICRC who travelled to London early in 1942. In view of the difficulties of the initial scheme, the British Red Cross decided to furnish the ICRC with a quantity of medical stores and funds for the purchase of other products in Switzerland.

The balance of the gift made by the Swiss Red Cross in 1940 allowed of the purchase of 82 kilos of vitamins; these were

sent off on October 6, 1941, with the agreement of the German and Swiss authorities.

It was not till April 22, 1942, that the ICRC was able to despatch a first consignment of supplies given by the British Red Cross ; this comprised six bales and a case of dressings.

A second consignment addressed to the *Feldkommandantur* of Granville, left on September 9. It included 33 cases of medical supplies and 15 bottles containing each 800 international units of insulin ; these stores reached the Islands on November 13, 1942.

Insulin being very much in demand, the British Red Cross sent 12,000 international units to the ICRC in April 1942. The Committee succeeded, after much difficulty, in shipping these to the Health Officer of Jersey, who sent an acknowledgment on November 13.

On November 19, 1942, the same Officer sent to the ICRC, through the German Red Cross, two lists showing the medical requirements of Jersey and Guernsey. These lists were forwarded to the British Red Cross on December 8, 1942. Subsequently, the Health Officer made several other requests, especially for insulin and cotton wool. Although the German Red Cross itself stressed the justice of these appeals, the British Red Cross refused to comply with them until they had received the acknowledgment of the 33 cases sent out from Geneva early in September.

The arrival of these cases was at last announced by the German Red Cross on March 5, 1943, and on May 10, they forwarded the acknowledgments to Geneva. The consignment included :

Miscellaneous sera . . .	3 cases
Drugs	4 „
Ether	20 „
Sulfamides	1 case
Sterilized catgut . . .	1 „
Sedormid	1 „
Powdered grape sugar .	2 cases
300 international units of insulin	1 case
Total . .	33 cases valuing 20,255.30 Swiss frs.

On the arrival of the two receipts, the British Red Cross arranged for a further consignment, which left London for Geneva on August 7, 1943, whence it was forwarded in three lots, on November 5, 10 and 12, to the *Feldkommandantur* of Granville. The latter sent them on to the Channel Islands, where they arrived before Christmas, 1943. In March 1944, the ICRC received acknowledgments from the local authorities for:

15 cases of surgical instruments	}	for the sick in the Island of Jersey
10 „ „ disinfectants		
8 „ „ medicaments		
1 case of medical supplies		
8 cases of surgical instruments	}	for the sick in the Island of Guernsey
3 „ „ disinfectants		
10 „ „ medicaments		
1 case of medical supplies		

The British Red Cross sent regular clothing parcels to the Channel Islanders who were interned in Germany. On learning of the precarious situation in the Islands, the detainees in Germany made up a few packages out of their own parcels and sent them to their relatives. Unfortunately, this practice was a breach of the blockade regulations. The British Red Cross therefore asked the ICRC not to send any more clothing to the internees until an assurance had been given that such practices would not recur. On being informed of this British decision, the internees asked for the removal of their relatives to Great Britain, or at all events for permission to send them small Christmas packages containing cigarettes, chocolate, soap, dried fruit, etc., which they would take from their own weekly parcels. The ICRC communicated this request to the British Red Cross, who gave their consent on November 19, 1943. Clothing or footwear were however forbidden, and the British Red Cross demanded a receipt from an Island official, and a "final report" from the camp leaders. The parcels reached the Islands shortly after Christmas; on March 7, 1944, the British Red Cross received the official acknowledgments.

Meanwhile, an extensive slaughter of cattle had given rise to a milk shortage. In September 1943, the Controlling Com-

mittee of Guernsey appealed to the ICRC, who referred to the Swiss Red Cross. On December 2, 1943, this Society agreed to sponsor a relief scheme solely for children. It handed the ICRC a sum of 53,000 Swiss francs and proposed that the following should be sent :

30 tons of potatoes
2,750 tins of vitaminized products
10,000 kilos of powdered milk.

This list was, however, altered, when it was stated by the German military authorities that requirements in potatoes were covered by native production ¹.

On November 14, 1944, the Joint Relief Commission notified the British Red Cross that they still held in Geneva the residue of the pharmaceutical and medical stores sent from London during 1944 for shipment to the Channel Islands. These stores could not however be forwarded, as the Allied landings in Normandy on June 6 had cut off communications with the Islands, which the Germans continued to occupy.

In the autumn of 1944, a poor harvest seriously aggravated the food situation. The Islanders interned in Germany once more asked the ICRC to urge the British authorities to organise a large-scale relief programme through Geneva before winter set in.

On October 18, 1944, the German Consul-General in Geneva called on the Committee, to explain that as a result of the Allied landings the Channel Islands had been cut off from all outside sources of food for several months. Rations had been drastically reduced ; there were practically no medical stores or soap. The Consul also stated that the situation had led the German military authorities of the Islands to suggest, by direct communication, to the British military authorities that the inhabitants, particularly the women, children, aged and sick, should be removed to England, but that the British authorities had refused. The Consul therefore asked the Committee to come to the aid of the population. He gave assurances

¹ For particulars, see Report by the Joint Relief Commission.

that the Committee could forthwith send a delegate to verify the critical situation in the Islands and distribute any relief that might be forthcoming.

Evidence of the keen interest of the Germans in the execution of this scheme was the fact that they laid down its acceptance, by the Allies as an essential condition to their consent to any relief action by the ICRC in behalf of occupied Holland¹.

The Committee at once communicated the German proposal to the British authorities, urging them to consider once more the possibility of waiving the blockade regulations—this time in behalf of their own countrymen—and to authorize a large shipment of relief supplies for the British inhabitants of the Islands, adding that the stock of bread would run out by mid-December 1944, and that reserves of soap, coal and many medicaments were entirely exhausted.

On November 8, 1944, the Committee's delegation informed the Channel Islands Committee in London of the proposed relief scheme, and suggested that a relief cargo should be made available to the ICRC.

On November 9, the British Consulate in Geneva notified the ICRC that the British Government would authorize the shipment of relief to the Channel Islands only under the following conditions :

(1) that the German Government should explicitly recognize their responsibility for the continued supply of basic food rations to the population of the Islands ;

(2) that all the necessary facilities should be granted delegates of the ICRC to supervise the distribution.

The British authorities particularly stressed that such relief foodstuffs should be regarded as supplementary, and that they should be shipped in the form of PW parcels. They also agreed to send medical stores, in order to build up stocks in Jersey, Guernsey and possibly Sark. But they considered that this large-scale programme would require the presence of at least two or three of the Committee's delegates in the Islands.

¹ See p. 449.

The German authorities were at once informed of these conditions. Meanwhile, it was planned to use the *Vega*, which had hitherto been carrying PW parcels under the Committee's markings between Lisbon and Marseilles.

On November 21, the German authorities agreed in principle to the conditions laid down by the British Government. They did not, however, confirm the statement made by the German Consul in regard to the presence of delegates of the ICRC in the Islands ¹.

Several practical details still had to be settled concerning the safe-conduct, the route to be followed and the port of arrival, but the belligerents quickly agreed on these points. The port of arrival was to be St. Peter Port (Guernsey), and navigation in the Channel would be under the direction of a German pilot. During these negotiations, a cargo of 150,000 food parcels, 10,000 medical parcels and four tons of soap were taken from British Red Cross stocks, and prepared for shipment.

The first difficulty arose over the appointment of the two delegates who were to supervise the distribution of these supplies. To gain time, the delegates had left Geneva for Lisbon before the Governments had given their consent to the scheme. The Germans raised objections to one of the delegates, who was replaced at the last moment by the head of the Committee's delegation in Lisbon.

The *Vega* finally left Lisbon on December 22, 1944. The British Red Cross requested that the delegates should find out the exact number of inhabitants, their living conditions, and their requirements in food, clothing and pharmaceutical and medical stores. Particular attention was to be given to the sick, whom the British authorities agreed to receive in hospitals in Great Britain, should the Germans be unable to give them proper care.

¹ Subsequently, the ICRC noted that the German authorities in the Islands made no objection to the landing, both in Guernsey and Jersey, of the Committee's delegates, who were given perfect freedom to discuss the situation with the civil authorities.

On December 27, the *Vega* arrived at St. Peter Port, with the following cargo, given by the B.R.C. :

Tobacco and cigarettes	24 cases =	1,328 kilos
Food parcels	119,792 =	669,697 „
Soap	120 cases =	4,137 „
Medical stores	82 cases =	2,159 „
Diet parcels	4,200 =	21,000 „
Salt	65 bags =	5,265 „
Children's clothing (given by Lady Campbell)	6 cases =	300 „

The ship also carried a mail-bag containing 1,133 letters and cards from PW and civilian internees in Germany.

The cargo was unloaded in two stages, and in proportion to the size of the populations, given officially as :

Guernsey and Sark	22,800 inhabitants
Jersey	39,500 „

The first unloading took place at St. Peter Port on Dec. 30, 1944, and the second at St. Helier (Jersey) on Jan. 3, 1945. The ICRC delegates supervised the distribution and warehousing of the supplies, in cooperation with representatives of the German forces, the civilian authorities of the Islands and the local branch of the British Red Cross. An immediate issue was made of one food parcel a head ; the remainder of the 119,792 parcels—for 62,300 inhabitants—was placed in stock.

The *Vega* left St. Peter Port on Jan. 4, 1945, and reached Lisbon on Jan. 9. That same day the representative of the British Red Cross in Lisbon was handed the lists of supplies distributed to the population of the two islands, countersigned by the Bailiffs.

Before leaving the Islands, the delegates had wired to Geneva to notify a second shipment to the Islands, this time of flour and yeast for bread-making, soap, clothing, underwear and shoe-leather : the acute shortage of these commodities required instant measures.

Investigations by the delegates also established the need for subsequent shipments to the Islands of coal and Diesel oil, to keep the electricity plants and gas-works running.

As the need for fuel was growing urgent, the British authorities suggested that the Foundation for the Organization of Red Cross Transports should charter a neutral vessel, able to carry 1,500 tons of coal at each voyage. The ICRC preferred such a vessel to be chartered, like the *Vega*, by the British Red Cross ; the British Government agreed and proposed the *Sirius*, a Swedish vessel then in the Baltic. The German authorities agreed to the use of a collier for the Islands, but refused to allow the *Sirius* to leave the Baltic. To secure their acceptance of the scheme, the British authorities stated that the *Sirius* might carry mail for German PW from Gothenburg to Lisbon. Thenceforward, negotiations were conducted through the Protecting Power. The Germans agreed to the use of the *Sirius*, and to the conveyance of coal direct from England, instead of from Lisbon. They insisted, however, on the *Sirius* being chartered by the Foundation, and not by the British Red Cross. Thus, after two months of discussions, the first proposal made by London was finally adopted.

On April 25, 1945, the ICRC submitted the route of the *Sirius* for the approval of the German Government. Dartmouth, on the south coast of England, was chosen as the port for loading. But the war was drawing to a close ; the use of this ship under the emblem of the ICRC became unnecessary, and the scheme was therefore abandoned.

In a telegram dated Jan. 13, 1945, the head of the Committee's delegation in Lisbon referred to a matter raised by the British authorities at the time of the first voyage of the *Vega*, namely, the removal of the seriously sick to Great Britain. The representative of the ICRC stated that this scheme had the consent of the local authorities and of the German military authorities ; the latter however demanded the right to select the evacuees. The difficulties encountered in settling matters of principle and in choosing the ship prevented the speedy execution of the plan, and the armistice put an end to the negotiations.

On their first visit to the Islands, the Committee's delegates had learned that 141 Allied PW were detained there. On the return voyage of the *Vega* to Guernsey, these PW were given relief parcels taken from the cargo.

To hasten transport, the British Red Cross proposed that the next voyage should start direct from Great Britain, but the Germans categorically opposed the scheme. Supplies therefore continued to be shipped from Lisbon, and the *Vega* made four more journeys from Portugal to St. Helier and St. Peter Port, accompanied each time by a representative of the ICRC. All distributions were carried out in accordance with the scheme established for the first shipment. Receipts from the Bailiffs were regularly handed to the representatives of the British Red Cross in Lisbon, together with further applications for relief made to the ICRC delegates. It was only on the third voyage that a consignment of flour could be added to the cargo conveyed by the *Vega*.

The following are the particulars of these four voyages :

Second Voyage :

Cargo given by the British and Canadian Red Cross.		<i>kilos</i>
Food parcels	134,656	749,691
Tobacco	102 cases	5,645
Medicaments	1,099 cases	44,905
Boot-soles	6 cases	220
Salt	150 bags	12,100
Diesel oil for electric power station in Jersey	10 drums	

Besides this consignment there were :

- 126 food parcels for 21 American PW (given by the American Red Cross) ;
- 360 food parcels for 120 French PW (given by the American Red Cross) ;
- 12 clothing parcels for 120 French PW (given by the Argentine Red Cross).

Schedule :

- Departure from Lisbon, Feb. 1
- Arrival at St. Peter Port, Feb. 6
- Departure from St. Helier, Feb. 16
- Arrival at Lisbon, Feb. 21.

Third Voyage :

Cargo given by the British and Canadian Red Cross.		kilos
Food parcels	72,704	408,333
Medicaments and surgical instruments	328 cases	9,973
Salt	150 bags	12,150
Flour	8,000 sacks	511,652
Yeast	37 cases	1,371
Soap	200 cases	5,306
Diesel oil (given by the Shell Company)	21 barrels	6,349
Petrol	7 barrels	1,179
Coal (for the locomotive used to convey the supplies)	8 tons	

Schedule :

Departure from Lisbon, Feb. 28
 Arrival at St. Peter Port, March 5
 Departure from St. Helier, March 11
 Arrival at Lisbon, March 15.

Fourth Voyage :

Cargo. <i>Given by the British Government.</i>		kilos
Flour and yeast	8,038 sacks	518,156
Sugar	360 sacks	18,981
Kerosene	13 casks	2,225

Given by the British Red Cross

Pharmaceutical products	2,031 cases	47,362
Salt	150 sacks	12,150
Seed	157 sacks	8,119
Candles, matches, spare parts, etc. . .	167 cases	9,694
Communion wine	1 cask	150

Given by the Canadian Red Cross

Food parcels	45,880	259,957
Soap	380 cases	11,022

Given by the American Red Cross

Clothing and footwear	963 bales	42,993
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In addition :

Foodstuffs for French PW. (Gift of the A.R.C.)	280 cases
Ditto for American PW. (Gift of the A.R.C.)	480 cases
Ditto for British PW. (Gift of the C.R.C.)	12 cases

Schedule :

Departure from Lisbon, March 31
 Arrival at St. Peter Port, April 5
 Departure from St. Helier, April, 15
 Arrival at Lisbon, April 19

It will be noticed that the relaxation of the blockade regulations (agreed to by the Allied authorities on Nov. 9, 1944) was still further allowed in this first relief programme, since a considerable quantity of clothing was added to the food shipments.

Fifth Voyage :

Cargo.	Given by the British Government.	kilos
Sugar.	360 sacks	18,981
Flour and yeast	9,308 sacks	502,056
Kerosene	14 casks	2,336

Given by the British Red Cross

Clothing and footwear	1,269 cases	49,707
Salt	150 sacks	12,150
Medicaments	8 cases	292
Soap	100 cases	3,175

Given by the Canadian Red Cross

		kilos
Food parcels	62,000	350,571
Cigarettes (for British PW)	1 case	

Schedule :

Departure from Lisbon, April 28
 Arrival at St. Peter Port, May 3
 Departure from St. Hélier, May 11
 Arrival at Lisbon, May 15.

This cargo was also unloaded in two stages, the first at St. Peter Port and the second at St. Helier on May 8, the day on which the German garrison surrendered. The German commander himself notified the Committee's delegates of the armistice. He went on board the *Vega* together with the Bailiff of Jersey, and surrendered his authority, as regards unloading, to the representative of the local branch of the British Red Cross. A large crowd then swarmed on board the vessel. For hours the delegates of the Committee had to shake hands, give their autographs, and even consent to be carried shoulder

high. They also learnt that many babies born within the last months had been christened Vega ¹.

§ 9. GREECE

On the outbreak of hostilities against Greece, the ICRC began its customary work under the 1929 Convention for PW and, by analogy, for civil internees. During the occupation, the Committee gave help to the Greek military disabled, sick and TB patients, and, in so far as it was possible in the absence of any Convention, ensured the welfare of the Greeks interned in concentration camps, and of the 55,000 Jews of Salonika who were removed from Greece in May 1943.

The Committee's chief efforts were, however, made in another field of especial importance: this was the relief of the civil population.

In normal times Greece imported more than one third of the foodstuffs required for national consumption; it was now completely cut off from the outside world. In addition, home production dropped considerably as a result of the war. When the country was entirely occupied at the end of April 1941, the food situation rapidly became critical, the more so as the areas which had been annexed by the Bulgarians (Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia) supplied over one quarter of the country's total agricultural production. Immediate action was needed if a calamity was to be averted. All available foodstuffs had to be sent at once, and at the same time a large-scale scheme for the continuous, extensive relief to a whole population had to be planned. Thus the ICRC, in pursuance of its humanitarian duty, was led, for the first time, to the large-scale relief of a civil population.

* * *

¹ Once more, the *Vega* sailed from Lisbon, on May 31, 1945 for the Channel Islands, this time under the entire responsibility of the British Government. She had on board the representative of the British Red Cross in Lisbon, and carried the remainder of the supplies warehoused in Lisbon for the Islands.

On May 30, 1941, the Committee's delegate in Athens sent an urgent appeal to Geneva, asking especially for an emergency consignment of milk for women and children. At the same time, a pressing call for help was made by the Greek Red Cross. By June 13, the ICRC had replied that it had begun negotiations and was preparing shipments.

The first opportunity to send help, although restricted in scope, came in the following circumstances. The Committee's delegation in Italy's African colonies informed Geneva that the women, children and sick civilians in Eritrea were in urgent need of condensed milk and other foodstuffs, and that the Italian Red Cross had placed a large sum of money at the disposal of the ICRC for the assistance of these people. After making unsuccessful attempts to purchase supplies in Egypt and Australia, the Committee learnt that a consignment of 100 tons of milk from the American Red Cross for the Greek population was lying idle in Egypt, owing to insurmountable transport difficulties. The ICRC proposed that the shipment should be presented to the Italians in Eritrea, whilst the Italian Red Cross handed over an equivalent amount to the Greek population. Negotiations were made in Rome by a mission from Geneva, and the Italian and German authorities agreed to the suggestion. The Greek population by this means shortly afterwards received 63 tons of powdered milk and a quantity of foodstuffs, the first wagonloads reaching Athens at the end of July 1941.

Meanwhile the ICRC applied in London and Washington for navicerts, in particular, for consignments of milk.

The Joint Relief Commission, on the proposal of its chairman, M. Carl J. Burckhardt, had also applied repeatedly to the National Red Cross Societies, for funds with which to purchase food supplies. A first consignment of the Joint Commission left Switzerland in November 1941¹.

A relief scheme was also organized in Turkey. The Turkish Red Crescent was able to buy large quantities of food for the

¹ Particulars will be found at the end of this report on the assistance given to the Greek population by the Joint Relief Commission. For further details see that Commission's Final Report.

account of the Greek War Relief Association. Upon arriving in Ankara in July 1941, the delegate of the ICRC took an active part in preparing these shipments. The ICRC, which had from the outset been engaged on the problem of transport by sea, agreed to distribute the supplies. Following these efforts by the ICRC and the Turkish Government, the Axis authorities agreed that a Turkish vessel, the *Kurtulus*, should convey the supplies from Istanbul to the Piraeus. In point of fact, the cargo of this ship had at first been intended for British prisoners of war in Greece, but as these were few in number, the ICRC secured permission from the Axis authorities for the *Kurtulus* to carry supplies also for the Greek civilian population. One month later, the blockade authorities allowed 50,000 tons of foodstuffs to enter the area under blockade. It should be added that the occupying authorities made it a strict condition that distribution of relief to Greece should be supervised by the ICRC.

The *Kurtulus*, during her sixth trip, sank with her cargo in the Sea of Marmora in January 1942; she was replaced by another Turkish vessel, the *Dumlupinar*, which was in operation until the month of August. These two vessels, sailing under the emblem of the Turkish Red Crescent, carried in all about 19,000 of the 50,000 tons of sundry foodstuffs contemplated. These cargoes included neither wheat nor flour.

An extensive relief scheme and regular food distributions had thus become possible.

In October 1941, when the first shipments from Turkey were due, the ICRC turned to the difficult problem of the reception and issue of relief supplies. Having secured the necessary permits from the Axis authorities, the Committee's delegation in Athens set up a supervisory body, subsequently known as the *Commission de Haute Direction*, or General Managing Board, which was to regulate and direct the relief work. This body was presided over by one of the ICRC delegates, and included the President of the Greek Red Cross and the representatives of the German and Italian Red Cross Societies. For the practical details of receiving and distributing the food supplies, the ICRC delegation set up an executive body, the

Comité de gestion des envois de vivres du CICR, or Managing Committee for ICRC food supplies, under the control of the delegation. The Chairman was a member of the ICRC delegation and the Committee included seven leading Greek citizens. The task of the General Managing Commission was to maintain liaison with the German and Greek authorities, and to take measures enabling the Executive Managing Body to carry out its work with the greatest possible efficacy ¹.

It was this organization which, with the limited means available, had the task of fighting the famine that was taking toll of the Greek population. It began its work on October 3, 1941, and continued until August 31, 1942, when it was replaced, as will be seen further on, by a new commission under the name of the "Managing Commission of the Delegation of the ICRC in Greece".

As shipments of wheat began to arrive only in March 1942, the consignments from Turkey served as the basis of the relief programme during the terrible winter of 1941-1942. The amount of food per month per person which before the war had been 155 kilos, dropped to 79 kilos in October, then to 50 kilos only in the spring of 1942. During this critical period, the population suffered grievously. The relief supplies distributed to the people, although of incalculable help and instrumental in saving tens of thousands of lives, were tragically inadequate. The loss of the *Kurtulus* at the end of January 1942 was severely felt in Athens; rations had to be cut to extremely small quantities. The shiploads of wheat and flour which arrived in March and April, and the return of the mild weather, fortunately averted the worst consequences.

The Managing Commission had at once set to work to organize the warehousing and distribution of relief supplies. They issued relief first to those suffering most severely from

¹ The first Executive Managing Body is fully dealt with in the Final Report of the Managing Commission of the Food Shipments of the ICRC, (Athens, March 1945), which was drawn up by its liquidator, Mr. Evangelos Papastrados, who succeeded Mr. Zannas as administrator-delegate of this body. The reader will find a summary of this statement in the Final Report of the Managing Commission for Greek Relief under the auspices of the ICRC, which is to appear shortly.

undernourishment, and used most of the food to help the inhabitants of the capital and its suburbs, where distress was acute. The order of priority was : hospitals and welfare institutions, war-disabled and war-victims, and the destitute ; at all times, it did all in its power for the children.

The Commission supplied food to forty-three hospitals, two infirmaries and three clinics for oedema established jointly by the Institute of Social Insurance and the Greek Red Cross, and to four State and three private sanatoria. These institutions, which from October 1941 to August 1942 depended on the Commission for their main supplies, had to feed about 190,000 persons. A few private clinics, including 6,500 patients and staff, also received limited quantities of food during the worst period.

Food was also supplied to twenty-one homes opened by various associations for the disabled and other victims of the war, refugees in particular, where a soup ration was issued each day to about 17,000 people.

Canteens were opened for the destitute. From the outset, the Commission supplied the Central Canteens Commission (K.E.S.), which in October 1941 controlled 39 homes and 180 distribution centres, with enough food to issue daily meals to about 75,000 people. In March 1942, the number of distribution centres had increased to 335, and the Central Commission had in addition opened 147 canteens for schoolchildren, administered by the School Insurance Committee (E.M.A.). The quantities of food handed over to the public canteens grew in proportion : the average number of daily rations supplied by the Management Commission rose, between December 1941 and August 1942, from 200,000 to 275,000 for the public canteens, and from 32,000 to 60,000 for the school canteens, that is to say, from 232,000 to 335,000 in all.

The Managing Commission also supplied foodstuffs to canteens opened by trade and professional organizations and by business firms. These numbered 292 and catered for 101,000 people in the early spring of 1942. The canteens for civil servants and employees, eventually totalling 121, and catering for 55,000 people, also received supplies.

Finally, the Commission gave relief supplies to industrial undertakings for their staff and workers' canteens, on condition that the firms bore certain costs. There were 246 industrial canteens in November 1941, and 1,015 in July 1942: at this point they were closed down, as the Commission had meanwhile organized the general issue of supplies through the grocery-shops. The industrial canteens served up to 88,000 people.

Throughout, the Managing Commission allocated supplies to public and private child welfare agencies; at the same time it sought to co-ordinate their work. In February 1942, it was agreed that infant welfare should be in the hands of the Greek Red Cross and the Patriotic Foundation, that relief to children under school age should be given by the E.O.H.A. (National Organization of Christian Unity), whilst relief to schoolchildren should be given by the E.M.A. (School Insurance Committee). The private organizations at the same time continued their activities. In addition to the school children, numbering from 25,000 to 30,000, who received food through the E.M.A., a large number of children in the winter of 1941-1942 were given one meal a day (containing one third of the daily calories necessary) in the special canteens that were opened in all quarters of Athens. Between April and August, 1942, the number of infants fed by the canteens (including those of the E.M.A.) rose from 10,000 to 25,000. The corresponding figures for pre-school children were 119,000 and 165,000; for school children 67,000 and 86,000, making a rise from 196,000 to 276,000 in all. In July, the total was 285,000. As Athens numbered at that time some 330,000 children and young persons under 18, the great majority of these therefore received relief from the school canteens. Those who did not were either of wealthy parents, or were registered in the public canteens.

Lastly, the Managing Commission did what it could to alleviate distress amongst the inmates of the thirteen prisons and concentration camps: their average number during this period was 36,500 and their sufferings were particularly severe. Greek Red Cross nurses issued the supplies.

Owing to the technical and administrative difficulties entailed by the ever-increasing number of canteens, which,

apart from the children's canteens, eventually exceeded 1,800 and served almost 500,000 persons, the Managing Commission decided to abandon the system of cooked meals and to distribute supplies in kind through the grocery-shops. An experiment made in November 1941 by the Ministry of Supply proved unsatisfactory, and the Commission itself therefore set up an agency for this purpose. From July 29 to September 15, 1942, this agency made three distributions, the last of which took place after the new Managing Commission had begun to operate. Each issue affected about 1,220,000 people and comprised close on 3,164 tons of miscellaneous foodstuffs, including flour, noodles, macaroni, etc., shelled hazel-nuts and dried raisins. The canteens, however, still continued their work.

The first cargo of grain was brought by the Swedish ship *Radmanso* after the ICRC had made urgent representations to the blockade authorities¹. This freighter, which was lying at Port Said, had been chartered by the British Red Cross to carry 7,000 tons of Egyptian grain to Greece. The ICRC procured the necessary safe-conduct from the Axis authorities, and the *Radmanso*, sailing under the Swedish flag, left Alexandria on March 13, 1942, arriving at the Piraeus on the 17th. Many difficulties, both in Egypt and in Greece, had of course to be overcome before sailing, since the ship was the first to ply directly between a port in the hands of the Allies and one occupied by the other side. She was followed by the *Sicilia*, chartered by the Greek War Relief Association of New York. This freighter left New York with a cargo of 3,000 tons of grain, under the Swedish flag, and berthed at the Piraeus on April 16. The ICRC had been asked on March 17 to obtain a safe-conduct from the Axis authorities, and was able to forward a favourable reply on the very next day. The *Hallaren*, chartered by the Swedish Red Cross and flying the Swedish flag, arrived at the Piraeus on the same day as the *Sicilia*, with a cargo of 4,000 tons of grain, a gift from the Swedish Red Cross, which she had loaded at Lisbon. The ship had left Gothenburg on February 20, on being authorized by the Germans to leave

¹ For details of these negotiations see below p. 460.

Sweden on this errand, and she had taken two months to arrive at her destination. This vessel was then scheduled to carry foodstuffs from Istanbul to the Piraeus, at the same time as the *Dumlupınar*. Finally, she was used to carry two loads each of 4,500 tons of flour from Haifa to the Piraeus, the first in June and the second in August 1942. On her second trip, she discharged 1,000 tons at Izmir for the people of the Greek Archipelago ¹.

Another Swedish cargo steamer, the *Stureborg*, which had been held up in the Near East, carried 2,000 tons of grain from Haifa to the Piraeus during May. The Axis Governments, when granting the necessary safe-conduct, had stipulated that this vessel should show both the Swedish colours and the ICRC markings, and should have an ICRC escort agent on board. During her return voyage to Haifa, the *Stureborg* was sunk by Italian planes in the waters south of Cyprus. The captain and crew, with the exception of one seaman, and the ICRC convoy agent all lost their lives. The Italian Government expressed its regrets to the ICRC and made official apologies.

From March to August, 1942, these ships in all delivered 23,361.5 tons of grain and flour, and 386.5 tons of miscellaneous foodstuffs to the Managing Commission.

¹ The ICRC then made negotiations for the *Hallaren* to continue carrying supplies to the Greek population, and instead of grain, to convey dried vegetables from Syria. In September, when the Argentine set aside a quantity of grain for Greece, the ICRC tried to arrange for its shipment, and to induce the German authorities to agree that the *Hallaren* be used for this purpose. But Germany who, as will be seen further on, had just consented to eight Swedish vessels leaving the Baltic to carry grain from Canada to Greece, refused consent, on the grounds that it was the turn of the Allies to supply tonnage by freeing, for example, three Swedish cargo boats which they were holding in Canada. Later, the Germans, who were considering the import into Greece of certain quantities of food to offset the requisition and export of Greek products, asked that this ship be placed at the service of the Greek firm "Ella Turk", to bring part of these supplies from Trieste and Venice. This question was the subject of lengthy discussions between the Swedish Government and the belligerents. The Allies finally gave their consent, after certain conditions had been accepted by the occupying Powers. From May 1943 to June 1944, the *Hallaren* made eight trips to Trieste and Venice, bringing to Greece almost 30,000 tons of food, including 16,000 tons of dried vegetables and 11,000 tons of sugar.

When the first cargo of grain was unloaded at the Piraeus, the daily bread ration for the capital had dropped to 30 dramia, or 96 grammes, and was moreover very irregularly issued. These deliveries made possible an appreciable improvement in what had become an extremely critical situation. Under an agreement between the head of the Committee's delegation and the Ministry of Supply, responsibility for maintaining the bread supply in the Athens area was divided equally between the Managing Commission and the Ministry. The bread ration was raised to 60 dramia (192 grammes) on March 25, 1942, and on May 3, to 67 dramia (215 grammes). The ration was kept at this level until August 3, when it had to be reduced again to 50 dramia (160 grammes), pending the arrival of the *Hallaren* on August 20.

The needs of the capital and the lack of transport allowed only of a small supply to the provinces : this, during the period when the first Managing Commission was at work, amounted to 2,993 tons of miscellaneous foodstuffs and 4,467 tons of grain and grain products.

The Managing Commission set up a separate service for the provinces, which appointed local " Red Cross Distribution Committees ". These committees were divided later, if the area was sufficiently large, into central and local committees : they received their instructions from, and were responsible to the Managing Commission.

The K.E.S. (Central Canteens Commission) also appointed Committees in a large number of prefectures to organize soup kitchens. Instead of distributing the food supplies in kind, these local committees sometimes handed the supplies over to the canteen committees, which made the distribution in the form of cooked meals.

The provinces and islands near Athens, where the food situation was as critical as in the capital, were necessarily the first to receive relief.

The Managing Commission itself had to procure information on the situation in the various provinces. It also collected data on the birth and death rates in a large number of communes. This preparatory work later proved most useful when the

Second Managing Commission, with far greater quantities of foodstuffs available, could give help on a larger scale to the distressed provincial population.

The ICRC delegates in Salonika worked tirelessly to ensure food supplies, in the face of a situation often complicated by the breakdown of communications between that city and Athens. When the new Managing Commission began its work, these delegates had already initiated an extensive distribution scheme and had organized medical and child welfare services ¹.

The Managing Commission for ICRC food shipments received in all 45,435 tons of goods, 25,516 tons of which were grain and grain products, and 19,919 tons miscellaneous foodstuffs.

The greater part of these supplies had been bought by funds given by relief organizations, in particular by the Greek War Relief Association and the Vanderbilt Committee, and by the Greek Government in London. The remainder, with the exception of a consignment of Italian maize flour provided by the Ministry of Food in Athens, came mostly from gifts by the Swiss Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross. The grain and grain products were purchased in the United States, Portugal, Egypt and Palestine, and the other foodstuffs for the most part in Turkey.

Relief Shipments to the Aegean Islands

As supplies could not be sent from the Piraeus, the ICRC assigned its delegation in Ankara the task of victualling the Aegean Islands until the new Managing Commission took over. Despite many difficulties, the first shipments arrived in June 1942. The approval of the Turkish Government, the representatives of Greece in Ankara, and the Allied and the Axis States had been given. Although a Turkish steamer was used,

¹ With the help of a Swedish delegate on this Commission, the three representatives of the ICRC (also members), then undertook the Commission's many duties involved in feeding the civil population, whilst continuing the traditional work of the ICRC. The organization set up Salonika to relieve the civil population employed at this time a staff of 350, as well as several hundred workmen.

the greater part of the cargo was carried by Turkish and Greek sailing vessels and fleets of caiques bearing the markings of the ICRC, based at Izmir. With the exception of the 1,000 tons of flour which, as mentioned earlier, were unloaded at Izmir from the *Hallaren* in August 1942, the relief supplies were bought in Turkey with funds largely from the Greek War Relief Association. The delegates of the ICRC in Ankara sailed with the boats, sometimes a hazardous and fatiguing undertaking. They themselves, with the eager help they found on the spot, distributed the supplies, and these were received with indescribable joy and gratitude by the population, then in dire need of help. The delegates were able, in particular, to issue 660 tons of miscellaneous foodstuffs in June and July 1942, and 1,000 tons in September of the same year to the islands of Chios, Mytilene (Lesbos) and Samos, and from these points the islands of Icaria, Furni and several others with smaller populations were supplied by means of small boats¹.

The ICRC, aware of Greece's urgent and vital need for much greater and regular relief supplies, and acting in close co-operation with the Greek Government in London, had begun in the early summer of 1941 to negotiate with Governments for a relief scheme on a scale commensurate with the gravity of the situation. The occupying Powers were approached on the subject, and the German authorities in Greece on November 11, 1941 communicated the following to the ICRC delegation: (1) The German Government agreed to the ICRC providing relief for the Greek civil population; (2) formal assurances were given that the relief shipments would go

¹ Distribution by the new Managing Commission began only in May 1943, as a result of the ban on the use of caiques for the transhipment of supplies from the Piraeus. By January 1943 it had been arranged that a Swedish freighter should carry to Izmir foodstuffs for the Islands from Canada; from Izmir, they were to be conveyed by sailing vessels. The first cargo was unloaded at that port towards the end of February, but the formalities for chartering caiques and installing the delegates in the Islands, delayed the forwarding of the food supplies until April. The ICRC delegation in Izmir saw to the unloading of the Swedish ships, and the warehousing, transhipment and transport by caiques of these supplies. Swedish delegates of the new Commission looked after distribution.

exclusively to the said population ; (3) every facility would be granted to the ships conveying these relief supplies.

On November 15, the Italian authorities gave similar assurances.

Without awaiting confirmation of these statements, the Committee applied to the blockade authorities for their consent to the shipment of quantities sufficiently large for Greece's requirements. M. Carl J. Burckhardt, a member of the ICRC and Chairman of the Joint Relief Commission, went to London in December 1941, to plead the cause of Greece. As a result, the blockade authorities allowed continuance of the shipments from Turkey, which thereafter rose to 11,500 tons, and stated that they would consider other relaxations of the blockade in favour of Greece. At the close of January 1942, they authorized the shipment of 1,000 tons of grain from Egypt. They also permitted the shipment of other relief in limited quantities, and the chartering of Swedish freighters which, as we have seen, carried over 23,000 tons of grain and flour to Greece at a particularly critical period.

The restriction imposed by Turkey made it impossible to procure any further stocks in that country and the other available resources were far from sufficient. Regular provisioning from overseas was essential if adequate and regular supplies were to be kept up. There remained, however, the problem of finding the necessary cargo space.

Upon M. Burckhardt's return, the ICRC approached the Swedish Red Cross on the subject. Sweden was then the only country which had the required ships. A number of Swedish freighters had been laid up in Baltic ports, since maritime communications with Great Britain and oversea countries had been cut after the German occupation of Denmark and Norway, and these ships could be used only with the consent of the German Government.

The Committee at the same time pursued its negotiations with the blockade authorities, while the Greek Government in London, the Greek War Relief Association, and the many friends of Greece did all in their power to hasten the success of the scheme.

In addition to the foodstuffs that could be supplied by the relief societies, by the Greek War Relief Association, in particular, the Canadian Government stated that they were prepared to furnish 15,000 tons of grain monthly.

The Allied Governments, while recognizing the urgency of these requests, could not agree to the shipment of far greater quantities of cereals and other foods, until they had definite guarantees as to the intended use of these supplies. They required assurances that relief would be distributed in its entirety to the Greek population, and that the food production of the country itself would still be reserved in the first place for the inhabitants.

The Allies were prepared to give preliminary permission for monthly shipments of 15,000 tons of grain, subject to the Axis authorities' acceptance of certain conditions. Early in March they asked the Swedish Government whether the necessary ships could be assigned for this purpose, and at once received an affirmative reply.

The next step was to induce the Axis Governments to agree to the conditions laid down by the Allies. The Swedish Government¹ and the ICRC took up the matter simultaneously and with equal vigour.

The Committee was able to inform the British Legation in Berne as early as February 3, 1942, that the Italian Government would do its best to facilitate this difficult enterprise. Shortly after, the German Government gave similar assurances. The Axis Governments asked however that no change should be made in the methods of distribution then in use, for which the *Comité de Haute Direction* was responsible². They also insisted that the shipments should be consigned to the ICRC delegation. On March 6, the Governments of the Axis countries reiterated their assurances, and the fact was at once communicated by Geneva to the British authorities.

¹ See Final Report of the Managing Commission for Relief in Greece.

² The *Comité* included, as stated above, representatives of the German, Italian and Greek Red Cross Societies, with the ICRC delegate in the chair.

Shortly afterwards, the Italian Government informed the ICRC that, though Italy had been able to deliver enough grain to Greece to ensure bread supplies until March, she was now no longer able to continue these shipments, and that it was urgently necessary to find enough grain to tide the population over until the next harvest in Greece.

At the same time the ICRC received distressing reports from its Athens delegation to the effect that the number of deaths in the city had risen to 5,000 in December (i.e. five times more than in December 1940), and that failing immediate supplies, Greece would suffer the most dreadful famine during the three months to come. Allowing for the cargoes to be taken by the *Radmanso* and the *Hallaren*, 20,000 tons of grain would have to be found in order to ensure a bare minimum of bread until the end of June.

On March 12, the Joint Relief Commission telegraphed this urgent appeal to the blockade authorities in London. At the same time the Committee notified the Greek Government in London and the American Red Cross. On March 20, it applied once more to the blockade authorities for permission to send the most urgent supplies, and stressed the imperative need for a large scale relief scheme. On April 18, at the request of the blockade authorities, the Committee once more gave details of the desperate food situation in Greece. Early in April, the Italian Government informed the ICRC that it thought inadvisable to increase the number of distribution agencies. On the other hand the Allied Governments expressed the wish that the grain supplied by Canada should be distributed under the responsibility of an organization which, like the existing one, would have the benefit of the Committee's experience and authority.

The Swedish Government meanwhile had approached Berlin and Rome, whose response, given in April, was encouraging; it was not until June, however, that the Swedes could give the Allies an assurance that the conditions they had laid down would be fulfilled. Certain difficulties still remained. In particular, the Axis Governments approved the distribution scheme set up by the ICRC, and did not wish it replaced

by another ; the British and United States Governments, on the other hand, while appreciating the aid of the ICRC, objected to any German, Greek or Italian Red Cross representation on the *Comité de Haute Direction* ; they wished the supplies imported through the blockade to be distributed by a strictly neutral commission, and suggested that the Swedish Government and Red Cross should both form part of such a commission. The Swedes readily agreed to this proposal, and it remained to discover a means of reconciling the demands of the belligerents. The Swedish Minister in Berne discussed the whole problem with the ICRC in Geneva on April 20, when the formation of a joint commission of ICRC delegates and Swedish citizens was mooted. In view of the magnitude of the enterprise, the ICRC was happy to enlist Sweden's help, the more so since that country had recently made an invaluable contribution to the work for Greece by her negotiations with the belligerents, and by the ships she had supplied, without which the Canadian grain would scarcely have reached its destination. To meet the Allied Governments' desires, the ICRC agreed to the proposal for a new Managing Commission without the leading Greek citizens who had hitherto given the ICRC invaluable assistance ; despite its readiness to co-operate with the Swedes, the Committee considered it hazardous to introduce any far-reaching change into the existing arrangement.

The matter was further discussed on May 6, 1942, in Geneva with the Swedish Minister in Berne, and the following plan was submitted by the ICRC to the Italian Government.

The ICRC would maintain the existing supervision of distributions, namely :

(1) — A *Comité de Haute Direction*, under the chairmanship of the principal ICRC delegate in Greece, and including, as before, representatives of the Italian and German Red Cross, and the Chairman of the Greek Red Cross.

(2) — A Managing Commission, presided over by an ICRC delegate and including a certain number of leading Greek citizens.

(3) — Where required by the increasing relief shipments, the addition of representatives of the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross to the Commission, with the same status as the ICRC delegates.

It was also proposed to set up a strictly neutral Red Cross Commission for the reception of all shipments from overseas and from neutral countries. The Managing Commission would remain in constant touch with the *Comité de Haute Direction*, which would maintain the necessary relations with the occupying and governmental authorities. The Commission would have power to set up Sub-commissions in Greek towns other than Athens and the Piraeus, where necessary.

On May 18 the Italian Government replied to this verbal note as follows :

(1) — The Government wished the work of distributing relief in Greece to remain in the hands of the ICRC, since this body was recognized by all belligerents, and had already done considerable relief work in Greece.

(2) — The Government approved an increase in the number of the Committee's assistants, whether of Swedish or Swiss nationality.

(3) — The Government thought it inadvisable to set up a neutral Red Cross commission, but proposed that the Managing Commission should be wholly composed of neutrals.

(4) — The Government agreed to the suggestion that this neutral Commission should, if necessary, set up Sub-commissions in towns other than Athens.

The ICRC transmitted this reply to the Swedish Government, which at once asked the British and American Governments for their consent. Before giving this, these Governments asked for further assurances :

(1) — That the duties of the *Comité de Haute Direction* would be strictly confined to maintaining liaison between the Managing Commission and the occupying authorities.

(2) — That the Managing Commission, composed solely of neutral delegates, would have certain powers and responsibilities only.

(3) — That the Swedish Government would be able to supervise the working of the plan, and to ensure that the conditions laid down by the Allies were observed by the occupying Powers.

In face of these reservations the Swedish Government and the ICRC again studied the question. It should be noticed

that collaboration between the ICRC and a Government had never been contemplated prior to this occasion. By its statutes and traditional principles, the ICRC is bound to carry out its relief operations on a strictly independent basis ; it cannot agree, even in exceptional circumstances and in any single country, to follow the instructions and act under the responsibility of any Government, even of a neutral country. The ICRC could not expose itself to the charge of serving Government interests. Betrayal of this fundamental principle would have jeopardized its entire work.

Furthermore, the activities of the occupying Powers had to be kept under strict surveillance, since the total supplies were to be handed over to the recipients, and at the same time the occupying Powers was not entitled to requisition an equivalent amount of domestic produce. Even had the ICRC been able to exercise such supervision throughout the country, it could not, as a matter of principle, have agreed to do so. It was therefore understandable that the Allies should invite another Government to undertake this responsibility and to be answerable to the Allies. Lastly, in view of the situation in Greece and the practical difficulties to be overcome, the distributing agency could have the necessary authority and powers only if the ICRC brought to its work the benefit of its credit with the Governments, the occupying Power, the local authorities and the Greek people themselves.

In view of these facts and the conditions laid down by the belligerents, the Swedish Government and Red Cross and the ICRC discussed the matter further in Stockholm and agreed to the following principles :

(1) — The relief scheme to remain under the sponsorship of the ICRC.

(2) — Distributions of oversea shipments to be handled by a strictly neutral commission ; as soon as the shipments were dispatched, Swedish delegates to sit on this Commission as delegates of the ICRC.

(3) — The *Comité de Haute Direction* to be maintained and its membership to include representatives of the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies ; its chief duty to be to ensure liaison with the occupying authorities and to make suggestions for the distribution of relief.

It was furthermore agreed in Stockholm that the neutral Managing Commission should (1) act as an ICRC agency ; (2) include about fifteen members, of Swedish or Swiss nationality, six of them, at most, to be delegates of the ICRC and the remainder to be assistants to the ICRC delegation, under the control of the head delegate ; (3) the latter to be Chairman of the *Comité de Haute Direction*, whilst the chair of the neutral Managing Commission would be filled by a Swedish national ; (4) the Swedish *Chargé d'Affaires* to be allowed to attend the meetings of the *Comité de Haute Direction* in an advisory capacity ; (5) the Swedish Red Cross to furnish the ICRC with a list of the Swedish nationals selected for the new Commission, whilst the ICRC would secure their approval by the belligerent Governments concerned.

The plan thus adopted in Stockholm was submitted by the ICRC to the Italian Government, who in a note dated June 5, expressed their approval, adding that the German Government agreed likewise.

On June 29, 1942, the ICRC issued a Memorandum to all the belligerents concerned, setting out the result of the various negotiations conducted by itself and especially by the Swedish Government.

The Swedish Government and the ICRC at once set to work on this plan which was of such vital importance for the Greek population. On July 21, when the first three Swedish ships sailed for Montreal, the ICRC submitted to the Italian and German Governments a list of the new Swedish and Swiss members of its delegation in Greece. At the end of August these new members had reached Athens, and the new machinery was at once set in motion, as the first shipments of Canadian grain had by then also arrived.

The new Commission, composed of eight Swedes and seven Swiss, and entitled the "Managing Commission of the ICRC Delegation in Greece", began its work on September 1, and the original Managing Commission was dissolved. In view of the size and great complexity of its task, the Commission was much aided by the fact that it could draw on the large-scale

organization set up by its predecessor, the work and experience of which were also of great assistance.

When the new agency had been at work for some time, it became apparent to the ICRC that the collaboration between its delegates and the Swedish nationals did not rest on a very satisfactory legal foundation. Whilst the Committee's own delegates were invariably engaged on a contract basis, the Swedish members of the Managing Commission were not so bound—a fact which the ICRC had failed to foresee. Consequently, the Committee could not give them instructions, as they were under the orders of their own Government. The fact that the relief organization became more and more governmental in character inevitably placed the ICRC in an awkward position; circumstances finally became so difficult that the ICRC thought it would be best to withdraw, whilst continuing, however, to lend all possible assistance, in particular by enabling Swiss delegates to take part in its work. In any case, a closer definition of the respective positions of the ICRC and of the Swedish Government, subscribed to by the Governments concerned, became urgent.

The ICRC and the Swedish Government exchanged views, first at Stockholm and later in Geneva and Rome; the discussions concluded on March 9, 1943, with the "Rome Agreements", the chief clauses of which were as follows:

(1) — Relief for the Greek civil population to be given under the auspices of the ICRC. The work to be pursued by two agencies, a *Comité de Haute Direction*¹ and a Managing Commission.

(2) — The *Comité de Haute Direction* to continue with the same membership as in the past under the chairmanship of the principal ICRC delegate, and its meetings to be open to the representative of the Swedish Government, or the Chairman of the Managing Commission. The

¹ The *Comité de Haute Direction* disappeared after the Italian surrender. In the subsequent period, the ICRC always maintained that the head of its delegation had, in a sense, become the successor of this body, that its specific powers passed to him, and that he had the right not only to be kept informed of the chief decisions made by the Managing Commission, but also to submit proposals or raise objections on humanitarian grounds, or for reasons of neutrality. In practice, however, and in the opinion of the ICRC, insufficient regard was paid to this point of view.

Comité to remain in contact with the responsible authorities in Greece regarding the work of relief, and to co-ordinate the activities of the relief agencies. The *Comité* to be kept informed of the work of the Managing Commission and of all its plans, and to have authority to submit proposals.

(3) — The Managing Commission to have equal numbers of Swedish nationals and ICRC delegates¹. The Chairman to be appointed by the Swedish Government, and the Vice-Chairman by the International Committee. The Commission to allocate and distribute the supplies consigned to it, and to supervise consignments from overseas and domestic foodstuffs as required by the Allied Governments. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman alone to have powers to make decisions. The final decision in the allocation and distribution of all goods carried by Swedish ships under the authority of the Swedish Government, to lie with the Chairman, responsible to the Swedish Government. The Chairman also to undertake the supervision required by the Allied Governments. The Vice-Chairman alone to have final authority in matters concerning relief supplied by the ICRC. In all other cases, decisions to be made jointly by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. In all instances, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to consult each other on the course to be followed.

(4) — The ICRC delegates in the provinces could, with the consent of the principal delegate, be asked to distribute supplies received from the Managing Commission, so long as instructions received from the Chairman of the said Commission did not run counter to the traditional principles of the ICRC. The ICRC delegates undertaking such duties for the Managing Commission to be responsible only to the ICRC, and to continue under its authority, whether they were members of the Managing Commission, or not.

(5) — Questions relating to the goods brought from overseas in Swedish vessels to be handled through the Swedish Government; any new problems in regard to these goods to be settled in each particular case by agreements sought through the same channels between the belligerent Governments.

The Commission took the name of "Managing Commission for Greek Relief under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross".

¹ The Italian authorities asked that the Managing Commission should not have more than thirty members. Owing to the difficulty of finding, in Sweden and Switzerland, qualified candidates free to serve for a sufficient period, the complement of thirty was reached only for a short time.

These provisions took effect late in March 1943, on the arrival in Athens of the new Chairman appointed by the Swedish Government, M. Emil Sandström, Counsellor to the Supreme Court of Sweden and Member of the Governing Body of the Swedish Red Cross, to whom the ICRC wishes here to pay a particular tribute. It should be recalled that important questions were usually discussed at the Commission's weekly sessions, before decisions were made by the Chairman, and that during temporary absences of the Chairman, his supervisory duties were discharged by a Swedish delegate, acting in the capacity of a representative of the Swedish Government.

In practice, the Rome Agreements did not lead to all the improvements which the ICRC would have considered desirable.

The ruling that relief was given to the Greek civil population "under the auspices of the ICRC" made that body responsible for the work as a whole. The ruling found its principal application in that the liaison between the Managing Commission and the occupying authorities was maintained by the chief ICRC delegate on the *Comité de Haute Direction*. Although it soon became apparent that it was neither practical nor possible to constitute the *Comité* as defined in the Rome Agreements, the ICRC held it to be the duty of its chief delegate to conduct negotiations with the competent authorities in Greece for the effective provisioning of the country. In practice, the ICRC noted that, even in cases where the particular responsibilities of Sweden towards the blockade authorities were not involved, negotiations were usually conducted by the Chairman of the Commission. Sometimes neither the ICRC, nor its delegates were informed of these steps. This was so, for instance, when highly important discussions took place between the diplomatic representative in Greece of the Swedish Government and the Chairman of the Managing Commission, which led, late in November 1943, to an agreement signed with the occupying authorities concerning the olive harvest. On the whole, it was not easy to maintain a satisfactory balance between the two parties co-operating in the Commission.

During the years 1943 and 1944, this situation was several times discussed by the ICRC and the Swedish Government,

but these conversations did not lead to appreciable results until much later. In addition, the ICRC was for a long time left in ignorance of the reasons why it had not been possible over long periods, to send food to certain areas, such as Epirus¹ where the situation was viewed with grave concern by the ICRC.

The Greek population—which generally drew no distinction between the Managing Commission, the “International Red Cross” and the International Committee—was on the whole ill-formed as to the ICRC’s powers in matters where the Committee had no authority to make final decisions, in particular as regards the allocation of relief. This state of affairs caused the Committee some anxiety. But the desire of each party to give all possible assistance to Greece, the recognition by each of the invaluable and indispensable contribution of the other in the pursuit of a common aim, and the bonds created by joint activities, often undertaken in trying circumstances, always overcame any difficulties. We should not forget that obstacles of this kind were virtually inherent in the nature of the parties whom circumstances had led to co-operate in a common task that could not have been accomplished without their concerted efforts. Both were inspired by the same will to serve, but both differed profoundly: the ICRC was a private Red Cross organization, a neutral body, relying solely on its experience: the other party—although the work of supplying Swedish delegates and of chartering cargo vessels fell to the Swedish Red Cross itself—was a Government with extensive resources that alone made it possible for certain tasks to be carried out.

By authorizing the use of its name and emblem for a relief work, the policy of which it could only influence to a limited degree, the ICRC made an important departure from its traditional principles. The step was, in its view, justified by the urgency and magnitude of the needs of the Greek population, the extreme danger in which they were and the peculiar circumstances of the work to be done. It was, too, vindicated by the devoted service given by the representatives of the Government with which the Committee was associated.

¹ See Final Report of the Managing Commission, Chap. VI.

From September 1942 to April 1944 the Managing Commission received a monthly average of 15,000 tons of wheat and 3,000 tons of dried vegetables, and after December 1942 an additional 300 tons (later increased to 600 tons) a month of condensed milk for children. These shipments were not merely supplementary rations; they formed the basic food supply of the large towns and also of a considerable part of the population in small towns and villages. The situation in the absence of this substantial help, which arrived on the whole at sufficiently regular intervals, can be easily imagined.

In spite of the supplies given by the Commission, the position however remained critical. During 1943 it deteriorated greatly. In December the ICRC received highly alarming reports from national organizations and from the leaders of all Greek political parties; these reports were confirmed by the ICRC delegation. The famine had become acute, particularly in consequence of guerilla activities and the very poor harvest, and the approach of winter heightened the anxiety. As a crowning misfortune, the consignment due to leave Turkey and the 30,000 tons of Canadian wheat awaiting shipment, were both held up through lack of transport. Prolonged shortage was undermining the health of the entire population. Furthermore, 250,000 people at least were homeless. It was therefore essential that greatly increased help should be given without delay. The ICRC representative thought that to meet the situation the consignments should be doubled; he drew particular attention to the absence of fats and albuminous foods.

During December, while the Swedish Government was taking independent action, the ICRC brought the above facts to the notice of the British, Canadian and United States Governments; the Red Cross Societies of these countries were also informed. The ICRC added that if money donations were made, it could purchase clothing in Switzerland.

At the end of January 1944, the United States Government informed the ICRC that its appeal had been considered, and that they had decided to dispatch 1,600 tons of albuminous foodstuffs each month. Additional quantities of milk and ten tons of Ovaltine would be sent from Canada, and the United

States would also contribute some fifty tons of concentrated food for children ; 2,500 tons of rice had also been allocated, part of which were already on the way, the remainder to follow in January and February. The request for a largely increased monthly quota of wheat and dried vegetables had been granted, and extra quantities would be dispatched as soon as possible. Authority had been given for a gift of 300,000 garments and shoes for children and young people, and it was hoped to dispatch half of these within a month.

Shortly afterwards the Allies advised the Swedish Government that the monthly quotas of wheat and dried vegetables could be increased to 24,000 and 6,000 tons respectively, and that they were sending 2,000 tons of tinned fish.

Additional Swedish ships were made available through the Swedish Red Cross, for the transport of these large quantities. Since early September, the ICRC had been trying to find Swiss vessels. Despite their goodwill the Swiss authorities could not meet this request, as Switzerland had only a very limited tonnage available. In regard to this fundamental problem of tonnage, we should mention the efforts made by the ICRC in June 1944, at a time when the Managing Commission—which had no reserve stocks—feared that the slightest hitch in the deliveries by the Swedish steamers would compel it to abandon its distributions¹.

Although larger consignments of dried vegetables and quantities of rice and fish reached Greece during the early

¹ The Allies were landing in France at that time, and it seemed probable that oversea shipments for Switzerland would be held up in Spain and Portugal, thus greatly reducing the sailings of the Swiss merchant fleet. The ICRC thereupon asked the Swiss Government for the use of some smaller vessels, and for part of the supplies blocked at Lisbon, in order to feed the Greek population. The Swiss Government agreed that one or two vessels and 3,000 tons of wheat should be handed over, so that late in August the ICRC was able to ask the belligerents for their approval. The Swiss Transport Office then offered the *Zurich* to the Foundation for Red Cross Transports, for a limited period. The Greek Government in London, which was to provide the funds for chartering this vessel, wished the ship to be available for a longer period, however, and so the offer was not accepted. The British Government informed the ICRC that in view of the military situation they could not give their approval. As the problem of tonnage had in the meantime been solved, the project was then abandoned.

months of 1944, the Commission did not receive the fresh quotas until the second quarter, and deliveries did not tally with the quantities named in the new programme until after the country was liberated, when the Allied imports arrived. Between April 1 and November 1, 1944, deliveries nevertheless reached a monthly average of 29,000 tons.

After the liberation, the Managing Commission was unable to unload forthwith the Swedish boats lying in the Piraeus, as the port had been destroyed by the Germans before they left. Athens was temporarily cut off from all domestic supplies, and food became short. The Commission did what it could to meet the situation. Telegrams were exchanged with the Swedish captains, Stockholm and Geneva, and it was found possible to make a general issue of part of the stock of parcels intended for Greek war-disabled.

When Greece was freed in October 1944, the Allied authorities stated that they would grant every facility to the Managing Commission in the execution of its task. The Commission, however, regarded its work as completed, and was planning to hand over its responsibilities to the Greek authorities on December 15. However, at the urgent and repeated request of the Greek Government, which was not yet in a position to feed the population, Sweden and the ICRC agreed to continue their joint work until the end of April, 1945. The resources of the Commission were then increased by the imports of the Military Liaison, a relief service for civilian populations attached to the Allied Military Command. The Swedish ships continued the transatlantic service, in accordance with the relief programme, until the end of March, after which they were used for a further four of five months to carry UNRRA supplies.

During this period, the Swedish Government were no longer bound by their obligations towards the blockade authorities, and the co-operation between the ICRC and the Swedish representatives on the Commission changed, in the sense that all decisions were made by mutual agreement ¹.

¹ See Final Report of the Managing Commission, Chapter XXVII.

Reference must also be made to the ICRC representatives' work for the protection of the civil population during the period immediately before the liberation, when local skirmishes, sabotage, punitive expeditions and reprisals were common. The delegation made contact—often with great difficulty—with the headquarters of EDES and EAM-ELAS, in order to obtain the concessions necessary for relief work. When the German troops left Greece, repeated protests of the ICRC delegates to the German command were successful in preventing the destruction of public utility installations, such as reservoirs, pumping stations, electric power stations, mills, stocks of goods, etc. At Salonika, the ICRC delegation acted as intermediary between the German forces and the partisans, and saved the town from large-scale destruction. In September and October 1944, the ICRC representatives succeeded in doing much rescue work on both sides of the firing line, after the retreat of the German armies.

The ICRC representatives were also able to give valuable service later on, during the civil war. This lasted from December 3, 1944 to January 17, 1945, when the Varkyssa agreements were signed; it caused much bloodshed in Athens, and added to the ravages of invasion and occupation those of domestic strife. With the approval of the British Command, the ICRC delegation succeeded in concluding an agreement with EAM-ELAS headquarters for the free passage across the fighting area of convoys of food and medical supplies. During this unhappy period, the representatives of the ICRC and of the Swiss Red Cross were particularly active. They largely took over the provisioning of hospitals and of the civil population, which would otherwise have been in a desperate position. Despite rifle-fire, mines, barricades, air attack and artillery fire, the Red Cross convoys daily crossed the fighting areas, since headquarters, the car park, fuel dumps and part of the stores were on one side of the lines, while the majority of the stores, the flour mills and the water tanks were on the other. Though many vehicles were put out of action, the ICRC representatives were spared the fate of a devoted Greek Red

Cross Nurse, Mlle Lecou, who was killed after volunteering to accompany a car-load of medical supplies.

* * *

The Managing Commission¹ received from overseas a total of some 610,000 tons of foodstuffs, including nearly 470,000 tons of wheat and wheat products. In addition, 3,600 tons were received from Sweden, 2,100 tons from Turkey², 31,000 tons from Axis countries by way of compensation, and 4,400 tons from Greece itself. Thus, between the opening and the close of its work, the Managing Commission handled about 651,000 tons of various foodstuffs. If we add the 55,000 tons given to the Committee by the Military Liaison for distribution, and the 6,000 tons left by the Germans, the total supplies amounted to roughly 712,000 tons.

In addition, the Managing Commission received from overseas 426 tons (gross weight) and 1,059 cases of medical supplies, 893,813 litres of cod-liver oil for children, and a quantity of hospital equipment, including 1,210 dozen spools of films and seven tons of X-ray equipment³.

Lastly, the Managing Commission was entrusted with large quantities of clothing⁴. Between February and August, 1944, it received some 900 tons of clothing for distribution to 300,000 children. After September 1944, the blockade authorities allowed the despatch monthly of 100 tons of clothing and footwear. After the liberation, the welfare organizations made a number of consignments. Altogether the Com-

¹ The Commissions mentioned here are the *second* and *third* Managing Commissions ("Managing Commission of the ICRC representatives in Greece" and "Managing Commission for aid to Greece under the auspices of the ICRC", September 1942—April 1945), which were marked by the collaboration between the ICRC, the Swedish Government and the Swedish Red Cross. The figures relating to the *first* Managing Commission ("Managing Commission of the ICRC for sending Food Supplies", October 1941—August 1942) were given above.

² The supplies from Turkey were sent to the ICRC representatives who instructed the Managing Commission as to their distribution.

³ See Final Report of the Managing Commission, Chapter XXII.

⁴ *loc. cit.*, Chapter XXIII.

mission received some 2,500 tons of clothing for children and adults¹.

In its complex duties, the Commission was seconded by the Swiss Red Cross Mission, whose first task, in July, 1943, had been to issue the milk and medical supplies which the Swiss Red Cross (Child Welfare Branch) sent to the ICRC representatives in Greece through the Joint Relief Commission. From the outset, the ICRC delegates made it a rule to hand over the whole of the milk, drugs and medicaments received to the Swiss Red Cross Mission. As this body had already set up part of the necessary machinery and was qualified to distribute this relief, and since its head was one of the ICRC representatives and therefore a member of the Managing Commission, the latter body decided that he should properly distribute the large quantities of milk, restoratives and medical supplies received from overseas, as long as the distribution was carried out in accordance with accepted principles. At Athens, the Piraeus, Salonika, Volo and in Crete, these relief supplies were distributed by the members of the Swiss Red Cross Mission ; in the provinces they were issued by the delegates of the Commission. The head of the Swiss Mission was responsible for co-ordinating these activities. In his capacity as member of the Managing Commission he was also responsible for supplying food to hospitals, sanatoria, welfare institutions, orphanages and canteens for children and students, etc. All the relief work for children and sick persons was therefore placed under his authority.

In addition, the Swiss Red Cross Mission organized independent medical aid for children, thus assisting the work of the Managing Commission. The Red Cross Mission thus rendered invaluable services to the Commission, particularly in the

¹ When the new Managing Commission started work, the central administration left by its predecessor was employing a staff of 500 people. When the new Commission finished its work, the staff numbered about 2,000. In addition, there were nearly 900 chauffeurs, convoy agents and caretakers, and over 2,000 workmen. These figures do not include the staff of the Swiss Red Cross mission, the nurses and voluntary aids who were doing relief work, nor the personnel of the canteens. Besides these, a large staff was employed in the provinces.

period when the latter had only a small number of representatives and had to solve complicated problems of organisation at very short notice ¹.

* * *

As regards the new Commission, composed of ICRC and Swedish representatives, the present account merely indicates the way in which this co-operation was carried on, the work and negotiations of the ICRC, the broad lines of the Commission's work, and the total amount of relief distributed. The Final Report of the Managing Commission supplies detailed information on all aspects of that body's work, particularly the organization, distribution and expansion of relief, relations with the German, Italian and Greek authorities, and help given by the Greek Red Cross and by Greek nationals.

Between 1941 and 1946 the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, mentioned above, sent to Greece 2,471 tons of sundry relief supplies (including 101 tons of clothing) valuing 7,062,500 Swiss francs, and 113,642 kilograms of pharmaceutical products and medical stores, to the value of 1,825,000 francs. The authorities of the countries concerned greatly assisted its efforts by sanctioning the transfer of funds, granting the necessary export permits and facilitating the transport of goods. Although the Commission's funds were relatively small, the supplies which it dispatched from the interior of Europe were of considerable assistance, especially to children, owing to the great nutritive value of most of the foodstuffs; moreover, the medical equipment and stores were often a useful complement to the supplies received by the Commission.

The necessary arrangements with the belligerents were made by the ICRC, and all relief supplies were sent to its

¹ The Swiss Red Cross Mission's work is described in Chapters XXII and XXIII of the Commission's Final Report. The Annex to that Report gives a short general account of the work done. For further details, see the Report on the Work of the Swiss Red Cross Mission in Greece.

representatives at Athens, who supervised their issue, according to the directions of the donors. After September 1942, the ICRC representatives made over to the Swiss Red Cross Mission all consignments of milk, restoratives and medical stores:

Thus, despite all the obstacles encountered, the economic blockade in particular, and with the co-operation of the Joint Relief Commission, the ICRC from the outset achieved results which, although small in proportion to needs, were vitally useful.

These relief supplies were, in fact, the first to arrive during a critical period, when nothing had been organized and when the prompt arrival of foodstuffs was a matter of life and death for hundreds of thousands of people. After September 1942, the relief programme assumed unprecedented proportions, thanks to the co-operation of the Swedish Government and Red Cross. The scheme undoubtedly saved a whole people from irreparable disaster; it was made possible by the goodwill of the belligerents and the authorities concerned, and by the continued efforts of a number of Red Cross Societies and agencies, the Greek Government in London and several neutral countries, added to those of various organizations—particularly the Greek War Relief Association and the Vanderbilt Committee—and of a number of private donors.

§ II. HUNGARY

When military operations spread to Hungarian soil, the ICRC delegate in Budapest made the utmost exertions to prevent the extermination of the Hungarian Jews ¹.

When the fighting approached Budapest, during the winter of 1944, he devised a scheme for assisting homeless children, regardless of their race or religion. Many people had been killed in air raids, and the evacuation of the population, by order of the Hungarian Fascist Government, before the Russian

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 647 et seq.; further p. 522 below.

advance had brought many orphans into the capital. In response to a public appeal, a large number of private apartments were put at the delegate's disposal, who used them as children's homes and placed them under the protection of the ICRC. Over 2,000 children of Jewish convert parents, who were receiving no help whatever, were housed, fed and cared for by the ICRC delegation while the battle was raging in the heart of Budapest.

After the German retreat, the ICRC representatives were unable at once to resume their ordinary duties. Nevertheless, they made themselves responsible for a thousand orphans in Budapest, and procured supplies and funds for the institutions in which the children were housed. This work was later on taken over by the Swiss Red Cross.

After relations has been established with the new authorities, emergency aid was conveyed from Switzerland to Budapest by the Committee's lorries, and later on by block-trains organized by the Joint Relief Commission. From 1946 onwards, when relations with abroad had become regular, the donors were free to deal with the receiving organizations direct; meanwhile the Hungarian Red Cross, too, was reorganized. The ICRC then withdrew its representatives in Hungary, and responsibility for the transport and distribution of the consignments from the Joint Relief Commission was assumed by the ICRC representative in Vienna.

However, before ceasing its work in Hungary, the ICRC helped to organize the distribution of relief. A committee was formed by the Government, with a representative of UNRRA in the chair. The ICRC representative, on the understanding that the committee would merely have advisory powers, agreed to sit on it, and suggested the appointment of an expert distributing agency. This body was presided over by a member of the Hungarian Red Cross and included representatives of the Prime Minister, the Ministries of Social Welfare and Food, and the Municipal Social Assistance Board. The ICRC representative was also an *ex officio* member. The duty of this body, known as the "Committee of Five", was to establish a plan for free food issues under the Red Cross emblem. The Hungarian

Red Cross was responsible for the receipt, storage and distribution of the supplies.

§ 12. ITALY AND THE ITALIAN POPULATION IN AFRICA

The ICRC was called in to help the Italian population only after the occupation of the Italian territories in Africa by the Allies.

Eritrea.

After the Allied victory in Eritrea, the ICRC endeavoured to send milk to the Italian children in that country. Owing to its close connection with the supply of milk to Greece, this scheme has been described in § 9 above (p. 451).

Italian East Africa.

After the close of hostilities in Abyssinia, in January 1942, the British and Ethiopian Governments concluded an agreement for the evacuation of the entire Italian population, with the exception of a few hundred technicians. The Swiss Government, in its capacity of Protecting Power, succeeded in having these Italians repatriated on board Italian vessels. They were due to embark at Berbera, in Italian Somaliland.

On May 6, 1942, a few days before the Italian ships called at Berbera, the ICRC was advised that they were carrying a large cargo of supplies for those Italians in East Africa who were not to be sent home. The Committee was requested to send a representative to Berbera to attend the unloading of the supplies, and to ensure their distribution in Eritrea, Italian and British Somaliland, and Abyssinia.

Thanks to the courtesy of the British authorities in the Middle East, a member of the Cairo delegation travelled to Berbera by special plane, where he arrived in time for the unloading, due to be ended on May 15. He drew up the following plan of distribution for 3,840 cases and bales of foodstuffs,

medical supplies and clothing, according to the type of product and the number of Italians in the various parts of East Africa :

2,777 cases and bales for Eritrea (80,000 civilians and 2,000 PW)
464 cases for Italian Somaliland (11,000 civilians)
599 cases for British Somaliland and Abyssinia (11,000 civilians and 5,000 PW)

Thirty-five cases were set aside for the members of the Italian Armistice Commission at Jibuti. Permission to send these was so long delayed that it was decided to add them to the consignment for PW held in the Berbera region. The British authorities thereupon received a further appeal in behalf of the Commission and finally gave their consent ; they undertook to transport the remaining twenty cases to Jibuti and replace the missing fifteen which had been sent to the above-mentioned camps, namely :

1 case of olive oil
5 cases „ tobacco
5 „ „ condensed milk
1 case „ orange juice
1 „ „ meat extract
2 cases „ Marsala wine

The distribution in Ethiopia and British Somaliland was carried out under the direction of the ICRC representatives, and was completed in June 1942.

The goods for British Somaliland were reforwarded by sea. A joint committee of British and Italian officials, with two members of the Italian Red Cross at Mogadishu, superintended the distribution.

The supplies for Eritrea, hastily unloaded during the night at Massawa, were unfortunately reduced by about 3 per cent through pilfering. On reaching this port a few days later the ICRC delegate verified the losses and lodged a complaint with the occupants ; the culprits were thereupon severely punished and the warehouse guards reinforced by Italian *carabinieri*. The goods were repacked with the help of the Italian Red Cross

and transported in 22 railway wagons to Asmara, the capital, where they were used as follows :

(1) — The food, medicaments and restoratives were issued to medical units (hospitals) and to the Italian Red Cross. The latter administered the restoratives, under medical supervision, to the sick and to children in the towns ; part of the medicaments were sent to Mogadishu, in Italian Somaliland.

(2) — The clothing, underclothing and textiles were given to the poor.

(3) — The cigarettes and tobacco were issued to the PW and civilian internees in Eritrea, and to all Italian men over 18 years of age.

The branches of the Italian Red Cross in Eritrea also received parcels of clothing, underclothing, textiles, cigarettes and tobacco.

North Africa.

When the North African campaign came to an end in May 1943, the Italian Government submitted a note to the ICRC and to the Swiss Government, as the Protecting Power, drawing their attention to the difficult position of the Italian residents and refugees in this area, particularly in Tunisia.

The ICRC passed this information to the American Red Cross representative at Geneva, who replied that President Roosevelt had issued instructions to the U. S. forces to assist the civilian population in North Africa, including the Italian residents, and that the occupying authorities were particularly concerned about Tunis.

The ICRC subsequently received an appeal through its delegate in Tunis, stating that the Italians in that town were no longer receiving financial help from the Protecting Power ; in October 1944, precise information at last reached Geneva as to the number of distressed persons and their requirements. The ICRC representative in Rome was put in possession of a quantity of medicaments by the Italian Red Cross, and was able to send them by air to Tunis early in 1945.

City of Rome.

Under the German occupation, many refugees lived in Rome in precarious conditions. The ICRC representatives set

about collecting funds locally, pending the arrival of relief from abroad. In April and May 1944 they were able to distribute to Greek refugees 83,000 lire, a thousand undergarments and 5,550 kilos of rice flour; they also assisted Yugoslav refugees, who were given more than 25 million lire during the second quarter of 1944. Seconded by the Swiss Red Cross, the ICRC attempted to procure milk in Switzerland, but negotiations with the blockade authorities for import permits continued until the Allied occupation of Rome, and the scheme thus fell to the ground.

The Allies at once organized the provisioning of the city and set up an Italian relief organization, which facilitated the transit of gifts collected by the Joint Relief Commission. This body, the *Ente nazionale per la distribuzione di soccorsi in Italia* (ENDSI), included representatives of the Cabinet, the Vatican, the Italian Red Cross, and later, the National Confederation of Labour. Its purpose was to collect and issue free to the population relief supplies from North and South America and other countries, including Italy itself, and gifts from private sources. The Italian Government granted this agency exemption from postal charges, customs dues, and taxes.

The ICRC representatives in Rome co-operated with ENSDI from the outset. The Joint Relief Commission also sent it all the shipments it made in its capacity as intermediary between donors and recipients, and thus enjoyed all the advantages granted to the national organization.

Southern Italy.

On September 9, 1943, the day of the first Allied landing near Naples, the Chairman of the Italian Red Cross happened to be in Geneva to discuss with the ICRC the question of feeding Southern Italy and Sicily. Wheat was becoming scarce in these provinces, which were cut off by the front from their usual sources of supply. In December 1943, the ICRC placed before the authorities a suggestion made by the Geneva representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross. Before the armistice was concluded, the Italian Government had ordered 150,000 tons of wheat from Hungary, and that country was now prepared to deliver

50,000 tons to Southern Italy, subject to the necessary permits being obtained.

In March 1944, the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London asked the ICRC for information concerning methods of payment and proposed routes. Military developments in Eastern Europe and the Balkans however brought the scheme to nothing, although it could not in any case have been carried out under the Red Cross emblem, owing to its commercial nature.

During the summer of 1944 several organizations in North and South America turned to the ICRC for assistance in the transport and issue of the supplies which they were anxious to forward to the Italian population in the areas occupied by the Allies. The most important of these associations, the American Relief for Italy, in New York, wished to send about 3,500 tons of clothing to Southern Italy. The ICRC could not, however, provide means of transport for these various bodies, since all the vessels in its service already had their full cargo of supplies for Allied PW in Europe.

The American donors were therefore advised to make arrangements direct with the Italian authorities in the liberated areas, or with the American Red Cross and UNRRA, who were already working in Italy. The ICRC however offered to all organizations anxious to use them for strictly humanitarian purposes, the services of the Red Cross delegates in the work of receiving and forwarding relief supplies and supervising their distribution.

Thus, in October 1944, the International Union for Child Welfare reported that their representatives in Buenos Aires had sent the ICRC representatives in Rome 5,000 tons of food-stuffs, for issue to the homes for children and adolescents whose needs the ICRC considered greatest, subject to full reports being made. In the meantime, the American Relief for Italy had set up an office in Rome and had been entrusted with the distribution of all relief received from the U. S. Supplies given by the International Union for Child Welfare were then issued jointly by the American Relief and the Red Cross representatives.

Regions bordering upon Switzerland.

The inhabitants of these districts naturally turned to Switzerland, which had not been affected by the war. An immediate response followed. Besides the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss Relief Fund, which furnished all the assistance in their power, many communes, associations and private individuals gave aid unsolicited¹. Many organizations asked the ICRC for information on needs to be met, and steps already taken, or contemplated; overlapping was thus avoided.

Northern Italy.

After its occupation by the Allies, Northern Italy remained cut off from the Central and Southern provinces until a permanent civilian administration was installed. Local government in the region was therefore different from that in the rest of the country. The transport system was almost completely at a standstill, owing to the dearth of fuel, the effect of air bombardment and the lack of vehicles due to requisitioning by the Axis.

In May 1945, at their first meeting with an ICRC representative, the Allied military authorities stated that they would endeavour to feed the population by large-scale imports from North and South America. Assistance from the ICRC would be welcome, but the Allies would themselves, in future, indicate the areas in greatest need, thus co-ordinating the offers of help, which were very numerous in Italy.

Moreover, as the Italian Red Cross was being reorganised, the ICRC was no longer called upon to provide material aid for the civilians in Italy. Its representatives in Tunis, Milan, Genoa and Trieste continued, however, to render service in matters of transport, storage and exemption from dues and charges.

¹ In this connection, particularly for the relief given to the Valley of Domodossola, see the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

§ 13. JUGOSLAVIA

After the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the creation of local Red Cross bodies by the Axis, the ICRC found it impossible to extend its relief work to the country as a whole, and was obliged to act separately in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro. The main task was to assist the women and children in worst need. In addition, certain categories of refugees and minorities were the object of limited relief activities.

Serbia.

Early in 1941, the American Red Cross was informed by the United States Minister in Belgrade that a serious epidemic of malaria was spreading in Yugoslavia. The A. R. C. cabled to the League of Red Cross Societies its readiness to make a grant for help to the Yugoslav population. The League proposed the purchase in Switzerland of medicaments, for consignment to the Yugoslav Red Cross through the German Red Cross, and distribution under the supervision of the American Red Cross representative at Belgrade.

The scheme was approved by the American Red Cross, and orders were placed to the value of 30,000 Swiss francs. The whole matter lapsed, however, in August 1941, when the American delegation was obliged to leave Yugoslavia. The League then applied to the Joint Relief Commission, which proposed that distribution be supervised by the liaison officer at Belgrade. This course was agreed to by the American Red Cross.

During the first half of 1941, the ICRC approached the German Authorities with a view to appointing a delegate in Belgrade, but this representative was finally granted no more than the status of liaison officer with the German Red Cross at Belgrade. This partial failure was due to the German Red Cross itself, which was in principle opposed to the appointment of ICRC delegates in territories occupied by the Wehrmacht. The Committee accepted this arrangement, despite its unsatisfactory character, in order to be able to operate in Yugoslavia, even if only in a limited manner. It was understood that the issue

of relief supplies would take place with the approval and under the supervision of the liaison officer.

In the case which has been mentioned, the German Red Cross, learning of the A. R. C.'s scheme for medical aid, informed the Joint Relief Commission on September 3 that no supervision by the liaison officer was required, and that the medicaments could be forwarded to the Serb Red Cross. The Joint Relief Commission, which was responsible to the donors for ensuring that issues were supervised by a neutral representative, was unable to accept the German proposition, and withheld the consignment which was ready for despatch.

Despite this set-back the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission, who were informed by their Belgrade representatives of conditions in the country, sought funds with which to buy the material that Yugoslavia required. The campaign of 1941 and the occupant's struggle against the resistance movement, took a severe toll of the inhabitants, thousands of whom were forced to leave their burnt-out villages.

The appeals made by the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission were answered mainly the American, British, and Swiss Red Cross Societies, American and Canadian organizations, and Yugoslav associations abroad. Purchases were also made possible by an allocation from the Shoken Fund to the Serb Red Cross.

Aided by the ICRC liaison officer, the Joint Relief Commission was to set up several relief schemes¹. Apart from the right to supervise distributions, the ICRC agent had succeeded in obtaining several privileges. He was authorized to inspect the warehouses in and around Belgrade where the shipments of the Joint Relief Commission were stored, and he forwarded the receipts of the Serb Red Cross to the ICRC.

The relief supplies which the Joint Relief Commission sent to Serbia were addressed to the representative of the German Red Cross at Belgrade, who forwarded them to the local committees of the Serb Red Cross. Under this system the Joint Relief Commission was exempt from transport charges and customs dues.

¹ See the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

The ICRC liaison officer also assisted the Swiss Red Cross in sending 450 Yugoslav children to the Ticino (Switzerland) for a stay during the summer of 1942.

The ICRC, having learned from the Yugoslav Legation in Berne that Yugoslavs abroad were planning to buy foodstuffs in Turkey for the Serb population, negotiated for the purchase and transport of these supplies. These were to be issued through the Serb Red Cross with the collaboration of the ICRC liaison officer. The latter, who was in Belgrade on sufferance, had but small influence ; to reinforce his position, the ICRC asked permission to appoint an assistant, to which the Germans agreed. It was thus possible for the first shipments to leave Istanbul in June, 1943 ¹. The total supplies sent from Turkey to the Serb Red Cross amounted to 3,000 tons of miscellaneous commodities (figs, raisins, olives, shelled hazel nuts, dried fish, salt meat, milk powder and soap).

Early in 1943, before the successful conclusion of the above talks, the ICRC received alarming reports on the food situation in Serbia. A great number of roads and railway lines were cut ; the 1942 harvest had been inadequate, and there were over 300,000 refugees, including 80,000 seriously underfed children.

The ICRC then approached the blockade authorities in London. Before that, one of its members had drafted a scheme in Lisbon for the import of foodstuffs from overseas ; the British Ambassador had assisted in this work and promised to submit the plan to his Government. The Ministry of Economic Welfare, however, refused its consent ; the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission had, therefore, to be content with making purchases in countries within the blockaded zone.

The Swiss Red Cross also opened a relief programme for the Belgrade children, and its contributions, valued at half a million Swiss francs, were received and distributed by the ICRC representative. On this occasion, the latter had a far greater freedom of operation and supervision than when dealing with shipments sent by the Joint Relief Commission.

¹ See the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

In October 1944, after the liberation of the country, the Yugoslav Red Cross published an appeal for the victims of the war, particularly the thousands of orphans, mostly destitute, who were living in the devastated areas. The Red Cross applied for the help of doctors and relief in the shape of medicaments, food and clothing ; the ICRC seconded this appeal.

After the armistice, the ICRC delegation stayed on in Belgrade with the consent of Marshal Tito's government. It assisted in the distribution of the supplies sent by the Joint Relief Commission ; helped by the Yugoslav Red Cross, it supplied three communal kitchens with powdered milk, part of a large consignment from the Swiss Red Cross ; it continued to handle relief sent from Turkey for Yugoslav children, and also issued the first shipments sent by the Swiss Relief Fund (food, clothing, bandages, medicaments, medical stores and vitamins), valued at 600,000 francs.

Through the various delegations, the ICRC was able to facilitate the movements and activities of the Swiss medical missions sent to Yugoslavia to prevent a feared epidemic, due to the lack of medicaments and sera ¹. In July, 1945, the Committee secured the rapid shipment to Yugoslavia of 200 kilos of vaccine and the same quantity of medicaments, given by the Swedish Committee for International Relief. The parcels had reached Paris by air, at which point they had been held up. The ICRC delegation in Paris applied to U. S. Headquarters and were granted priority for immediate conveyance by air ; the consignment thus reached Yugoslavia safely.

The ICRC, through its delegations, also secured contributions from various organizations overseas, in the shape of funds and commodities, for the distressed Serb people. The South African and Canadian Red Cross, the Irish Donation and the Swiss Relief Fund, were among the principal contributors ².

¹ See Vol. I, p. 721.

² A list of these contributions will be found in the Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Croatia.

The Zagreb Government having agreed, in February 1943, to apply the two Geneva Conventions, the ICRC appointed a representative in that town. Croatia was short of food, clothing and medical stores. The ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission, having no funds available for this work, set about finding contributors.

As the result of negotiations with the Geneva representative of the Yugoslav Red Cross in London, and with the Croat Government through its representative at Zagreb, the ICRC obtained from the Yugoslav Red Cross in London a gift of 50,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of sera, and from the Croat Government a grant of 500,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of medicaments. The Swiss Red Cross also agreed to contribute funds for medicaments and sera, and expressed the wish to send to Croatia a medical team, to combat possible outbreaks of exanthematic typhus in particularly devastated areas.

The Joint Relief Commission, which had already despatched several small consignments to Polish refugee Jews in Croatia, arranged to send medicaments for distribution by the ICRC representative, assisted by the Croat Red Cross. The Croat Government, however, refused permission for a Swiss medical team to accompany the shipment, and the Swiss Red Cross therefore abandoned its original plan for exclusively medical aid. Instead, it made a grant of 200,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of food and medicaments. These supplies were distributed by the Joint Relief Commission and the ICRC delegate ¹. The children of Zagreb and the surrounding districts thus received considerable quantities of milk. These shipments made up somewhat for the shortage of essential supplies.

Through the ICRC representative at Zagreb, the Swiss Red Cross then offered, through the Croat Red Cross, to receive some 500 Croat children in Switzerland for a three months stay. The Croat Red Cross was, however, obliged to decline this offer.

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Early in 1944, the fighting in Croatia grew still more fierce between the German forces, assisted by German-Croat police squads, and the Resistance movement. Both sides exercised reprisals, from which the civil population was the first to suffer. Railway communications were largely destroyed and sea traffic was suspended. The number of homeless people grew steadily, as the Allied air raids became more frequent.

The Joint Relief Commission and the ICRC, which received regular reports from its representative, endeavoured to expand their relief work, despite the lack of funds and the growing shortage of commodities in Europe. Contact with Marshal Tito's representatives enabled the ICRC delegations at Zagreb, Algiers, Cairo and Bucharest to organize relief for the populations of the areas freed by the partisans. The Zagreb delegation was thus able to despatch medicaments to these areas¹, and the ICRC had the opportunity to send relief supplies to Yugoslavia when a medical team of the *Centrale sanitaire suisse*, whose journey it had facilitated, left for that country².

After the armistice, Yugoslavia was again united, and the ICRC maintained only its delegation in Belgrade, closing down its offices at Zagreb early in 1946.

Dalmatian Islands.

During a visit to Geneva in March 1943, the ICRC representative at Zagreb reported that there was famine in the Dalmatian Islands, particularly in those of Brac and Lesina, as a result of the suspension of maritime traffic.

On April 16, the ICRC informed the Italian authorities that it proposed to provide relief in the Dalmatian Archipelago, and asked for help in the form of regular communications or means of transport. Such means were promised on May 7, by the Italian Government, who added that they themselves would make every effort to supply the islands. The representative of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Geneva proposed the purchase of some 2,500 tons of flour, enough to feed nearly 40,000 people.

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

² See Vol. I, p. 721, and Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

As wheat could not pass through the blockade, the ICRC instructed its delegations in Hungary, Rumania and Croatia to submit this scheme to the Governments of these countries. Hungary replied that she was unable to export flour, as she had not enough for her own needs. Rumania gave a similar reply, but indicated that she could furnish 1,000 tons of barley.

In June, 1943, the Croat Government and Red Cross announced that, thanks to the help of the Italian Government, they could undertake the provisioning of the Dalmatian Islands, and that the proposed relief scheme was therefore unnecessary. The ICRC nevertheless consulted the Swiss Red Cross, and the latter, in July, contributed 50,000 francs for the children in the islands of Brac and Lesina. Naval operations in the Adriatic however precluded any direct transport at this time, and the above donation was included in the general relief for the Croat population. Finally, when, in October, the Croat Government showed interest in the Committee's offer, the situation in Italy had suffered such a radical change that the initial scheme was no longer feasible ¹.

Montenegro.

Montenegro, one of the areas of Jugoslavia that had suffered most severely, applied to the ICRC for relief in the shape of foodstuffs and clothing for the inhabitants and for the refugees who had arrived from all parts.

In the absence of funds for this purpose, the ICRC asked the Joint Relief Commission to consult individuals and organizations able to contribute funds, and to study the technical problem of transport and distribution. After applying to the representatives of the American and Yugoslav Red Cross Societies at Geneva, and to the ICRC delegations in London and Washington, the Joint Relief Commission was able to meet this request ².

¹ For the few shipments despatched to Slovenia, which was annexed by Italy, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

² For details, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Muslim Community in Yugoslavia.

A large proportion of the Western Balkan population is Muslim. After its occupation by the Axis forces, the area was shared between Albania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Croatia. The majority of the Muslims lived in Croat territory. Threatened by persecution, they flocked to the North, seeking refuge in Sarajevo and the Save Valley. Their number was put at 198,000, mostly widows and orphans; 108,000 were children under 14. Immediate help was required, to prevent starvation and disease.

In May 1944, the ICRC informed the President of the Arab Academy at Damascus, who was then in Geneva, of the desperate plight of these refugees, and asked him to name Muslims who could procure the necessary funds.

The Committee also applied to the Turkish Red Crescent and sent the Egyptian Red Crescent, at its request, the information supplied by the Zagreb delegation.

Having noted a report from the Joint Relief Commission to the ICRC delegation in London, the Yugoslav Red Cross and the Yugoslav Relief Society, in August 1944, announced grants for the purchase of pharmaceutical supplies in Great Britain. At the close of the year the Egyptian Government gave £E 25,000, and the Egyptian Red Crescent £E 5,000. Despite twelve months of negotiations, these funds could not be transferred, but were spent on the purchase of raw cotton for manufacture into cotton goods in Yugoslavia.

Pursuing the study of its plan with the ICRC delegation in Cairo, the Joint Relief Commission encountered new obstacles: the Yugoslav authorities thought it unfair to favour Muslims at the expense of the numerous other war victims, in a country where everyone needed assistance. Later, diplomatic relations having been re-established between Egypt and Yugoslavia, donors and recipients were able to settle the matter directly and the distribution of relief was assigned to the Yugoslav Red Cross.

Fiume.

Early in 1944, the ICRC representative in Rome was informed by the Chairman of the Poor Relief Committee that the civil population of the town and district of Fiume was faced by a serious food shortage. A large influx of repatriates and refugees without means of support had greatly increased the indigenous population of 25,000. The children were in urgent need of milk. The ICRC representative in Northern Italy thereupon travelled to Fiume, despite great difficulties caused by the operations of the Resistance, taking with him two cases of condensed milk, 192 kilos of milk powder, 12 large boxes of Eledon, 3,200 soup cubes and 50 parcels of coffee substitutes, given by various donors in Milan. In addition, he had a sum of 15,000 lire for distribution to needy Yugoslavs in Fiume.

Talks with the military and civil authorities on Feb. 12, 1944, showed that the food situation was the same as in other towns and communes in the neighbourhood. Health conditions were fairly satisfactory, but the children were short of milk, particularly in Susak Camp, where 600 families, all refugee Yugoslavs awaiting repatriation, received only two scanty meals daily.

The representative handed the provisions he had brought with him to the camp store ; eighty litres of milk were at once issued to 106 children under ten. As this camp was closed in February 1944, the supplies did not need to be replenished.

On June 22, 1945, the ICRC delegation in Rome re-opened the question of relief for the population of Fiume, and stated that supplies would be put at the immediate disposal of the ICRC, on condition that the boat was accompanied by an ICRC representative, who would also supervise distribution. The Vatican and the Italian Red Cross hoped to be able, by the end of August, to collect 60 tons of food and medicaments for shipment from Ancona to Fiume on an Allied vessel, at the donors' expense.

Late in August, the ICRC delegate in Trieste succeeded in reaching Fiume and met the civil authorities. The Bishop of Fiume was prepared to organize the distribution, but his offer

had to be approved by the occupation authorities. As the port was completely destroyed, it was decided to transport the goods by road from Trieste.

However, the ICRC representative in Trieste was unable to secure the occupants' permission to convey the supplies to Fiume and to issue them there. On October 3, 1945, therefore, the ICRC wired to its delegation in Belgrade asking it to secure permission for one of its members. The Yugoslav authorities, however, delayed their consent. Supplies were also slow in reaching Trieste, as so many obstacles had damped the goodwill of the donors. On November 27, the ICRC representative in Trieste was at last able to report that 28 tons were awaiting shipment at Ancona. On December 3, the motor vessel *Esperia Redenta* unloaded fifteen tons, instead of the 28 tons that had been expected.

Although application for permits for further shipments were made well in advance, these still failed to materialize. However, the ICRC delegate at Trieste again succeeded in going alone to Fiume, for further negotiations. The distribution of the supplies was scheduled for Christmas Day, and was to have been supervised, not by the Bishop of Fiume, but by the newly-founded local Red Cross, which was in contact with the Yugoslav Red Cross, as well as with the Italian Red Cross.

The recipients were those of the communal Register. Priority was given to the unemployed and to the relatives of prisoners of war and deportees. This distribution, as well as later ones, was carried out with the help of various local and neutral organizations.

§ 14. NETHERLANDS

The position in the Netherlands deteriorated in the autumn of 1944. In order to check the Allied advance, the occupying forces, whose numbers increased steadily, flooded large areas, thus destroying a great part of the harvest. Owing to the strike of the Dutch railwaymen, the products of the agricultural provinces in the North could not be sent to the Western provinces. Finally, the serious damage inflicted on the German

railways hampered the provisioning of the country. Famine was threatening, particularly in the three Western provinces (South Holland, North Holland and Utrecht), where the population had already suffered great privations during some four years of occupation.

Public opinion all over the world was deeply concerned by the peril which menaced an entire people, for which it held the occupying Power responsible, and called for immediate action. This did not facilitate the task of the ICRC, which had to observe extreme caution in approaching the German authorities.

On the occasion of preliminary talks with the German Consul in Geneva concerning the supply of food for Holland under the Red Cross emblem, the ICRC was told that such a scheme would only be permitted if it operated discreetly; public appeals through the press would almost certainly lead to an official refusal. Furthermore, the Government's decision would depend on the Allies' consent to the dispatch of relief to the Channel Islands—an undertaking to which the German Government attached the greatest importance¹.

Meanwhile the ICRC, in its attempts to find support for its scheme, enlisted the active cooperation of the Netherland Government in London. The Dutch authorities promised their financial assistance, and backed up the endeavours of the Red Cross representatives in London to persuade the blockade authorities to make an exception in favour of Holland. Several national Red Cross Societies were also urgently requested to give their help.

In Switzerland various organizations, including a Committee in Basle, had quickly purchased foodstuffs and clothing with funds subscribed, notably by the Dutch Red Cross and the Swiss Relief Fund. Large quantities of wheat released by the Swiss Government were lying at Lisbon, ready for despatch. Acting on behalf of the Dutch Red Cross and the Swiss Relief Fund, the Joint Relief Commission purchased 2,600 tons of grain warehoused at Ratisbon and originally intended for

¹ See p. 443.

Belgium : the recent liberation of that country had led the Germans to prohibit their export to Belgium.

The transport of these supplies raised a particularly difficult problem. On November 7, the ICRC suggested to the belligerents three routes which appeared practicable :

- (1) — By barge down the Rhine from Basle to Rotterdam ;
- (2) — By ICRC vessel from Lisbon to a Dutch port, named by the Germans ;
- (3) — By rail through Germany.

The Germans raised no objection to the first of these routes. The American authorities agreed to it in principle, on the recommendation of General Eisenhower's headquarters. The American Commander-in-Chief was strongly in favour of the Committee's attempts to relieve the Dutch population. The British Government, however, delayed their reply, and finally refused their safe-conduct for military reasons and on the plea that the Rhine was mined, and that in one place at least its course was blocked by fallen bridges. The barge, painted white and bearing the Red Cross emblem, which was ready to leave, had therefore to be unloaded. The Joint Relief Commission, however, succeeded in despatching the cargo across Belgium in a block-train, which reached the liberated part of the Netherlands on January 10, 1945¹.

Great difficulties also hampered the transport of the 2,600 tons of grain stored at Ratisbon. These cereals had been purchased by the Joint Relief Commission with Belgian funds released in Hungary ; the consent of the blockade authorities was therefore not required. Owing to the disorganisation of the German railway system, it was impossible, however, to convey the grain by rail from Ratisbon to the Dutch frontier. The Germans thereupon made over to the Joint Relief Commission an equivalent amount of rye which was lying at Essen (Oldenburg), a small town near the Dutch frontier. The Dutch Government in London, the donor of these foodstuffs, valued at 800,000 francs, accepted this offer. After testing the quality

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

of the rye, the ICRC delegate had it conveyed by special trains to Rotterdam. This consignment made it possible to increase the ration for 3,200,000 inhabitants of the Western provinces by 400 grams a week for a period of three weeks.

The supplies stored at Lisbon included 3,575 tons of grain released to the Swiss Relief Fund by the Swiss Government, 600 tons of pulse foods, 500 tons of rice and 175 tons of oat-flakes given by the Swiss Relief Fund, in addition to a large quantity of medicaments offered by the Dutch Red Cross and 30,000 standard food-parcels, the gift of the Canadian Red Cross.

The *Henry Dunant*, flying the Swiss flag and bearing the markings of the ICRC, was put at the Committee's disposal by her owners, the Foundation for the Organisation of Red Cross Transports. This was done in agreement with the American Red Cross, which had priority for the transport by this vessel of parcels for American PW in Germany.

Early in November 1944, the ICRC applied to the belligerents for safe-conducts for the ship, and for the free passage of its cargo through the blockade. The United States granted a safe-conduct at the end of the month; Germany agreed in principle, but insisted that the Allied blockade should be lifted also from the Channel Islands. Moreover, she refused to allow an ICRC delegate to enter the fighting area, and proposed that the issue of supplies should be supervised by a commission of ICRC representatives residing in Holland and of Dutch Red Cross delegates. For Great Britain, on the other hand, the presence of an ICRC delegate was an indispensable condition of the operation. The ICRC then sought to induce the Germans to yield on this point, particularly as it was informed by the Dutch Red Cross in London that the Red Cross Committee in Holland had recently been reorganised and no longer commanded the confidence of the population.

The position in the Netherlands, meanwhile, became increasingly critical and it was essential that the *Henry Dunant* should sail at once. Urgent representations by the ICRC induced the German authorities to allow a delegate to accompany the ship to the Dutch port of Delfzijl and to ensure that the

cargo was properly accepted and forwarded. Furthermore, a member of the ICRC delegation in Berlin was to be in this port a few days beforehand and assist in the unloading. Both delegates, however, were strictly bound by their instructions, and the distribution centres in the interior would be supervised not by them, but by four Swiss residents in Holland, appointed for this purpose by the ICRC and free to communicate with the ICRC delegates at Delfzijl. These conditions were finally accepted by the British, who were notified that the route they had suggested—along the West coast of England and Scotland and then along the coasts of Sweden and Denmark—would be followed.

When the cargo for the *Henry Dunant* was ready, the ICRC advised the British Government of the ship's sailing, adding that after Gothenburg she would be accompanied by a German escort and would pass through the Kattegat, the Kiel Canal and along the German coast. On January 3, 1945, London however made a new reservation: before allowing the ship to sail, the Foreign Office wished to study the reports by Swedish residents in Holland on the distribution of the relief sent by the Swedish Red Cross. Two possibilities were feared:

(1) — Confiscation of the supplies by the Germans, in an endeavour to break the resistance of the Dutch people by underfeeding;

(2) — Fresh conditions imposed by the Germans, which might yield them further military advantages.

Thus an exceedingly urgent relief undertaking was held up still further. Moreover, there was a danger, if the vessel could not be used at once according to plan, of its being claimed by the American Red Cross, and the ship's lying idle in the port of Lisbon involved heavy demurrage. The attention of the British Government was drawn to these objections; they then authorised the sailing of the *Henry Dunant* for Gothenburg, but reserved their decision concerning the remainder of the voyage. Should the decision be favourable, a fortnight would be gained, i.e. the time taken to sail round the British Isles; if it were negative, the cargo would be unloaded at

Gothenburg and forwarded to its destination at the earliest opportunity.

Shortly after this, the ship left Lisbon for the Faroe Islands. The master had orders to sail through the Skepenfjord ; owing to a misunderstanding he had not been given the detailed charts asked for, and finding no pilot at the appointed place, he set another course. Unable to find the Skepenfjord in these circumstances, he decided to sail round the Islands on the north-east, and then met an escort which took him to Thors-havn.

After a fortnight's voyage, the *Henry Dunant* finally reached Gothenburg on February 11. On the 15th, the ship was allowed to leave for Delfzijl, at the same time as the *Hallaren*, a Swedish boat also carrying supplies for the Netherlands. Owing to the shallow waters of the Sound—the route fixed by the Admiralty—the vessel had to leave at Gothenburg 1,700 tons out of its cargo of 6,000 tons. These 1,700 tons included the standard food-parcels of the Canadian Red Cross, and these finally reached Holland on board the *Hallaren* a few days after the liberation. These supplies were issued in the Western provinces, chiefly to persons over sixty years of age.

On March 8, the *Henry Dunant* entered the port of Delfzijl, where she was anxiously expected. Her cargo was transferred on to canal barges, which took the supplies to the distribution centres. This work was done by the Netherlands Department of Agriculture and Fisheries—of which the Food Bureau was a branch—and was supervised by the ICRC delegates. The barges were sealed at Delfzijl, and the seals were verified on arrival by an official of the Food Bureau in the presence of the ICRC delegates. The said Office provided the Maas mills and its own bakeries for converting the grain into bread.

Large posters informed the public of the arrival of the supplies and their origin, manner of issue, and the places where they would be handed out free, against receipts. The distribution was effected in the following way :

(1) — 2,150 tons of flour were issued in the shape of bread to the whole population over four years of age ; 3,200,000 persons thus received two weekly rations of 400 grams each ;

(2) — 500 tons of rice were set aside for children and nursing mothers with babies up to six months, which represented two weekly rations of 250 grams for about 860,000 children ;

(3) — 175 tons of oat-flakes provided 293,190 children under 13 with two weekly rations of 150 grams ;

(4) — 460 tons of lentils were issued to communal kitchens, especially in the cities, allowing an issue of 0,75 litre of soup per head for four to nine days ;

(5) — The surplus flour, rice and oat-flakes were sent to children's canteens and to hospitals.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries met all the costs incurred in distributing the supplies (dock charges, pilots, transports, storage, milling, etc.).

The occupied provinces were not alone in receiving relief through Geneva. From December 1944 to March 1945, the Joint Relief Commission was successful in sending across France and Belgium four block-trains for the Netherland Red Cross at Tilburg¹. A large part of these supplies was not employed in this area, but was placed in reserve for issue in the Western provinces on their liberation, as those provinces had suffered even more severely.

In their reports, the ICRC delegates stressed the fact that the situation in the Netherlands remained serious, in spite of these consignments. The ICRC, acting in close cooperation with the Joint Relief Commission, then sought fresh help. In response to its request, the American Red Cross abandoned its rights to the services of the *Caritas*, due to convey food-parcels for American PW, and allowed her use by the Swiss Relief Fund for a second relief shipment in April 1945. However, the armistice meanwhile concluded made it possible to use block-trains, which were quicker and cheaper. The goods thus conveyed² were distributed by the Netherlands Red Cross, with the cooperation of the ICRC delegate who had taken up his duties at The Hague after the liberation. As these supplies were insufficient to give the whole population

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

² For details, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

appreciable help, they were set apart for those districts and categories of persons which were in the greatest need.

In May 1945, General Eisenhower negotiated with the Germans in occupied Holland for the relief of the civil population. An agreement for the despatch of relief teams was signed by both parties; it included a clause authorising an ICRC representative to enter occupied territory in order to supervise distribution. The armistice, however, overtook this scheme.

Lastly, attention should be drawn to the assistance given by the ICRC to the relief work undertaken by Zurich University in aid of the professors at the University of Leyden. The ICRC facilitated the journey of a party of professors from Zurich to Leyden, to greet their Dutch colleagues. Later, Zurich University invited several Leyden professors and their families for a month's stay in Switzerland, and the ICRC helped in procuring their visas, and organised the journey, in cooperation with the Swiss Red Cross. Two groups, one of 48, and the other of 46 professors, arrived in Switzerland, the first on July 27 and the other on August 23, 1945.

§ 15. NORWAY

The Committee's work in favour of Norway appears slight, when compared with its efforts for other occupied countries. This is due to the role played at this time by Norway's neighbour, Sweden, a country which had escaped the war and whose population and Red Cross could thus give invaluable help to the victims of distress in Norway.

The Committee's work was therefore confined to those situations where the difficulties caused by the occupying forces could be overcome only by a non-political, as well as neutral intermediary. This was the case at the beginning of the Norwegian campaign. The Norwegian forces which were still resisting in the north had no ambulances, medicaments or dressings, as the stores set up in the south had fallen into enemy hands. The ICRC attempted to have part of these stores sent to the north, but the Germans refused.

As the result of an appeal in November 1940 by the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC, the latter had received gifts intended by the donors for Norwegian women and children, in general. With the agreement of the League, part of the funds were used to purchase 15 tons of sugar in Czechoslovakia and 15 tons of millet in Hungary. Together with three tons of dried raisins offered by the Turkish Red Crescent to the Norwegian Red Cross, the goods were sent to Oslo through the German Red Cross. There they were handed to the Norwegian Society for distribution among children in Norway.

Beginning as soon as it was created, the Joint Relief Commission despatched several consignments to Norway. Their distribution was supervised by the ICRC delegate in Stockholm, whenever the Germans granted him permission to visit Norway. The delegate was thus able to make valuable contact with the Norwegian Red Cross and to inform the donors about the conditions of life and the needs of the Norwegian population.

In 1944, it again appeared that action by the ICRC alone would overcome the obstacles to relief work in Norway. Northern Norway had just been liberated by the Russians, and Sweden had had reports of the tragic situation of the population, which had been forcibly removed by the retreating Germans.

The ICRC consulted the Norwegian Government in London and the Norwegian Red Cross delegate in Geneva, on the possibility of sending relief to these areas in a neutral ship sailing under the Red Cross flag, which could also on its return voyage bring back the sick.

The Swedish Red Cross was, however, also dealing with the question, and the Swedish Government had already taken urgent steps in Berlin. The German Government agreed to the dispatch of relief to these districts, on condition that similar supplies were sent to the areas already occupied by the Russians. This demand nullified the proposed scheme. Fortunately, however, owing to the exceptionally mild weather, the evacuation of the population involved less hardship than had been anticipated.

§ 16. POLAND

Immediately after the end of the Polish campaign, the ICRC considered the question of relief for the civil population and for the Polish refugees in neutral countries. A delegate was sent on a special mission to Berlin, in September 1939, to consult the authorities and the German Red Cross, and to learn their views on a relief scheme for which the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies would take responsibility.

In principle, the German authorities concerned were not opposed to such an appeal being addressed to all the national Red Cross Societies. Arguing, however, that the supplies contributed by the International Red Cross would be small in comparison with the efforts already made by German organizations for the provisioning of Poland, they asked that the proposed appeal should not be worded in terms that might serve the adversary for propaganda purposes.

At a further meeting in Berlin, the German Red Cross, which was strongly in favour of the scheme, informed the ICRC delegate of the shortage of medicaments in Warsaw. The delegate was able to verify the fact during a trip to Poland, when the Polish Red Cross and other welfare organizations gave him lists of urgently needed medicaments and medical stores.

On the other hand, the German authorities in Poland assured the delegate that the relief given by the Red Cross would be issued free to those who were in greatest need. In addition, they pledged themselves that the parcels for the Jews would be handed to them intact.

The only provinces which could benefit were those of Warsaw, Radom, Cracow, Lublin, and half that of Lodz. No relief could be sent to the provinces of the former Polish Republic which had been annexed by Germany, and the inhabitants of which were regarded as German citizens; the same applied, in spite of repeated attempts, to the provinces occupied by Soviet Russia.

The cooperation of the German Red Cross greatly facilitated the scheme. The Red Cross was instrumental in obtaining the

consent of the German Ministry of Transport for the free carriage and customs free consignment of all goods sent to its representatives in the General Government, who would reforward them through local Polish organizations. The occupying authorities did not, however, allow the Central Committee of the Polish Red Cross to continue working. It was agreed that receipts signed by the Polish organizations benefited would be sent in duplicate to the ICRC. In January, 1940, the latter circulated these details to the National Red Cross Societies and the other welfare organizations that were in a position to assist the Polish population.

It would be impossible here to enumerate all the gifts in money and in kind which the ICRC received to this effect, or to describe all the negotiations required, both for the transfer of funds and for export permits from the countries, chiefly Switzerland, that gave assistance. The following schedule is a summary of the consignments made, from February 1940 to July 1941, by the ICRC to the German Red Cross delegates in Poland; most of the items were contributed by Red Cross Societies overseas:

1940			Kilos
<i>Feb.</i>	Sugar	500 sacks	30,000
<i>March</i>	Chocolate	5 cases	273
	Food and clothing	3 "	116
	Pharmaceutical products	22 "	485
<i>June</i>	Food and medicaments.	33 "	1,082
	Surgical instruments	4 "	221
	Food	144 "	5,091
	Pharmaceutical products	14 "	659
	" "	1 case	20
<i>May</i>	Clothing	83 cases	6,797
<i>Aug.</i>	Food	14 "	524
	Pharmaceutical products	9 "	165
	Bandages	14 "	859
	Food	41 "	1,462
	"	242 "	8,611
	Soap	77 "	2,473
	"	77 "	2,461
			<hr/>
			66,299

		<i>Forward</i>	Kilos
1940			66,299
<i>Sept.</i>	Condensed milk	200 cases	5,000
<i>Oct.</i>	" "	180 "	4,500
	Food and clothing	3 "	80
<i>Dec.</i>	Bandages and medicaments . . .	2 "	83
1941			
<i>April</i>	Medicaments and restoratives . .	8 "	219
<i>July</i>	Pharmaceutical products	4 "	189
		Total	<u>71,370</u>

In addition, the American Red Cross gave valuable help to the Polish population through a Committee, under Mr. Hoover's chairmanship, which included representatives of the various welfare organizations in the United States. This Committee had considerable funds, but its work came to an end when the United States entered the war.

Although the ICRC stressed the advantage of collective shipments, it was very often requested to send individual parcels to occupied Poland. As regular postal services had not yet been restored, the ICRC requested the German Red Cross to assist in forwarding such parcels. Early in March, 1940, the German Red Cross stated that its delegates in the General Government would transmit individual parcels addressed to residents in the principal districts of Poland, on condition that they were forwarded in the form of collective shipments, accompanied by lists of addressees. The parcels were not to exceed five kilos in weight ; spirits, tobacco, matches and saccharine were prohibited.

From its creation in the autumn of 1940, the Joint Relief Commission undertook responsibility in principle for relief to Poland. In 1941, however, the ICRC itself ensured the safe arrival of a shipment of clothing (16,350 kilos) in the following circumstances. On March 10, 1941, the *Cold Harbour* unloaded at Marseilles a quantity of clothing which the American Red Cross delegate in that town forwarded direct to the Swiss military authorities, for issue to Polish military personnel interned in Switzerland. The ICRC was subsequently informed

by the Swiss that, according to the attached instructions from the donors, the Commission for Polish Relief in New York, part of these goods were intended for Polish PW in Germany and the inhabitants of Polish occupied territory. The Geneva delegate of the Polish Red Cross in London thereupon requested the ICRC to forward these goods to the German Red Cross at Cracow, for transmission to the Polish Central Committee in that city, which was able to operate freely in Poland.

Certain preliminary steps were, however, required. Firstly, this clothing was not a commodity in transit, like the relief supplies from overseas, in respect of which the ICRC acted as shipping agent. The present consignment, having been imported into Switzerland with the remainder of the above shipment, could not be exported without a licence. Furthermore, it was contrary to the general blockade regulations to send relief goods from overseas to civilian populations of occupied territories. The blockade authorities, however, gave their consent, through the British Consulate in Geneva, and the export licence being granted, the clothing was loaded on three railway wagons and left for Cracow on September 24, 1941. The clothes were chiefly distributed in Galicia, an area that had hitherto received no help of this kind. The receipts, signed by the Polish Central Committee, were returned to the Commission for Polish Relief in New York on October 21, 1942.

In addition to this shipment of clothing, the ICRC on October 29, 1941, sent the Polish civilian population 101 cases of soap (12 tons) bought in Portugal, and 120 cases of woollen goods (three tons).

The ICRC also dispatched minor surgical instruments, purchased in Germany at the cost of 30,000 Swiss francs, and originally intended for Polish PW in that country. As these instruments were extremely scarce in Poland, they were handed to the Polish Central Committee, at the donor's request.

The role of the ICRC as neutral intermediary in a particularly difficult relief task also deserves brief mention. In August 1944, the Warsaw population, encouraged by the Russian advance to the eastern bank of the Vistula, rose against the occupant. The battle which raged in Warsaw led to the exodus

of hundreds of thousands of civilians, including a large proportion of women, children and old people. These refugees were assembled at Pruszkow, about twelve miles from Warsaw, in a transit camp with a capacity of some 50,000 persons. Thence they were transported towards the western part of the General Government, to the Wartheland, a part of Poland annexed by the Reich.

On August 25, following an appeal by the Polish radio in Warsaw, the Geneva representative of the Polish Red Cross in London informed the ICRC of this tragic situation, and placed large funds at the disposal of the Joint Relief Commission.

The ICRC at once issued an urgent appeal to the Governments and Red Cross Societies of Germany, Great Britain, Russia and the United States, with whom responsibility for any relief scheme primarily rested. The ICRC was especially anxious to send a member of its delegation in Berlin to Pruszkow, to supervise the distribution of relief. The only means of giving rapid relief would have been to send aircraft which could parachute two to five tons of supplies on each trip; the ICRC made arrangements to this effect with "Swissair" and tried to find the necessary fuel. Unfortunately, the belligerents concerned refused all safe-conducts, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

A proposal to deduct for Pruszkow part of the supplies given to the ICRC for PW and civilian internees was rejected. The Joint Relief Commission succeeded, however, in sending to the camp a large quantity of goods paid for by the Polish Red Cross in London. Twelve railway wagons despatched by the Commission happened to have left Switzerland three weeks earlier and had arrived at Cracow, not without difficulty, chiefly through the efforts of the German Red Cross. The Joint Relief Commission at once took steps to divert part of these supplies to Pruszkow camp. At the same time, it made further shipments¹.

Further, the ICRC delegation in Berlin was advised on September 15 that one of its members would be allowed to visit

¹ For details, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Pruszkow. He arrived there on the 17th, and spent two days visiting the entire camp and some of the dependent infirmaries, and supervising the distribution of supplies received from Geneva. Whereas the total number of persons passing daily through the camp at the time of the revolt was 30,000 and more, it had fallen by now to about 4,000. The delegate then proceeded to Warsaw, the evacuation of which was being pursued under appalling conditions, and reported to the ICRC on the most urgent needs. He then visited the Wartheland, to check the issue of relief in that area.

In early October, the ICRC received a new appeal from the Polish Central Relief Committee at Cracow. Echoed by the German authorities, the German Red Cross and all the Polish organizations, this Committee stated that the health and lives of about 30,000 people were threatened, since they were facing the winter without bedding, clothing, linen, footwear and medicaments, none of which the German authorities were able to supply in sufficient quantities. The ICRC at once relayed this appeal to all the Red Cross Societies and welfare organizations able to relieve these terrible sufferings.

From the outset, the Swedish Red Cross had despatched large quantities of relief goods to Pruszkow ; this Society now renewed its efforts, with the most effective cooperation of the American, British and Canadian Red Cross Societies.

Early in 1945, talks between the ICRC and the Paris representative of the Polish Government of Lublin determined the manner in which aid might be given to the liberated areas of Poland. Shortly afterwards, the Relief Organization set up by the ICRC delegation in Rumania sent working teams to the spot, who concerned themselves primarily with the Jewish communities. These teams were the main source of information on the extreme destitution of the Polish population.

Early in the autumn of 1945, a fleet of ICRC lorries successfully conveyed the first relief supplies for liberated Poland from the Joint Relief Commission ; the latter used block-trains for this purpose, as soon as railway communications were re-opened. The ICRC delegate who had been at Warsaw since April, 1946, cooperated with the Polish Red Cross, to which

these goods were delivered, and took an active part in their reception and unloading ¹.

Relief Work for Polish Refugees in Neutral Countries

In their flight before the German and the Russian invaders, many Polish civilians took refuge in Rumania, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. The Red Cross Societies of these countries came to the help of the fugitives, most of whom arrived exhausted and in pitiable condition.

The ICRC and the League issued a joint appeal on September 26, 1939, asking for help for these people, and a number of Red Cross Societies in non-belligerent countries sent the following contributions to Geneva :

American Red Cross	90,000 dollars
Belgian Red Cross	5,000 Belgian francs
Brazilian Red Cross	2,500 dollars
Estonian Red Cross	4,000 French francs
Dutch Red Cross	2,000 florins
Jugoslav Red Cross	60,000 dinars
Swedish Red Cross. . . .	20,000 Swedish crowns

These figures represent only part of the contributions made by National Societies for Polish refugees. To these should be added the very large gifts, in money and in kind, made by the Red Cross Societies in the four receiving countries. Other welfare organizations also gave their help through the ICRC.

The Hungarian, Rumanian, Lithuanian and Latvian Red Cross Societies received relief from the ICRC and the League in the shape either of funds for purchases locally, or of supplies bought in neutral countries, chiefly medical stores, clothing, footwear, bedding and soap. The joint delegates of the ICRC and the League on repeated occasions obtained information from these Societies as to the number and needs of the refugees, so as to ensure the fair distribution of the relief supplies.

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

§ 17. RUMANIA

Relief work in this country was principally for the Jews ¹. However, the ICRC was empowered to deduct certain sums from the funds destined for Jewish communities, with which the Bucharest delegation assisted the civil population, and in particular opened communal kitchens in 1944.

As was the case in other countries, the delegation negotiated the delivery and distribution of relief supplies sent to the Rumanian Red Cross by the Joint Relief Commission ² and the International Relief Centre.

¹ See p. 520.

² See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Chapter 3

Special Cases

§ I. JEWISH CIVILIAN POPULATION

In its relief work for civilian populations, the ICRC paid special attention to the Jews. In Germany and the countries occupied by her, or under her domination, especially Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Jugoslavia¹, no other section of the population endured such humiliation, privation and suffering. Deprived of all treaty protection, persecuted in accordance with the National-Socialist doctrine and threatened with extermination, the Jews were, in the last resort, generally deported in the most inhuman manner, shut up in concentration camps, subjected to forced labour or put to death.

The ICRC did everything in its power for these hapless people. The right to humanitarian action, was, however, its only authority for trespassing in a field which States considered to be exclusively their domestic concern, in which no international treaty provisions could run. Some measure of prudence was therefore essential, and the Committee refrained from steps that held no hope of success; these would merely have resulted in compromising, to no-one's advantage, those of the Committee's activities that rested on tradition or on the Conventions. The wisest course was to profit by the very limi-

¹ For aid to the Jews in Shanghai, see Vol. I, p. 480.

ted facilities granted, to endeavour to secure others, to be watchful of changes in the political situation and to seize every opportunity for interceding in behalf of the victims of the racial discrimination practised by the Reich.

The question of relief for the Jews amongst the civilian prisoners or deportees held in prisons, concentration camps and closed ghettos has already been dealt with¹. We must now speak of the aid given to the Jewish section of the free population. In Germany and her satellite countries, the lot of the civilians belonging to this group was by far the worst. Subjected as they were to a discriminatory regime, which aimed more or less openly at their extermination, they were unable to procure the necessities of life, even in the reduced quantities to which "Aryans" were entitled. Moreover, the Jewish communities had been seriously impoverished by the discrimination, confiscation and robbery practised on them for many years.

Relief work for the Jews opened up a new field of activity for the ICRC, where it was able to profit by experience already acquired, but where it continually encountered the almost insurmountable obstacles put in its way by the Axis Governments and the Allied blockade authorities. Part of this work was the concern of the Joint Relief Commission, a body which had, indeed, been set up to assist civilian war victims; consequently, the task of aiding ghettos and Jewish communities also fell to it. The Commission thus procured food, clothing and medical supplies, which were distributed by the National Red Cross Societies and other welfare organizations, so far as possible in the presence of an ICRC delegate.

Whilst the Joint Relief Commission carried out the technical part of the mandates entrusted to it by Jewish organizations and sent relief supplies to the countries where this was permitted, the ICRC increased its diplomatic pressure on the Governments concerned and the occupying Power, in the hope of securing some relaxation of the harsh treatment inflicted on the Jewish population. In response to numerous urgent appeals, the Committee thus worked for the protection of Jews, for their emigra-

¹ See above pp. 73 et seq.

tion to Palestine and for the repatriation of civilian deportees ¹. The despatch of material relief nevertheless constituted its principal activity in this field.

As shown above ², the ICRC set up within its general services a "Special Aid Division", to deal with all questions relating to persecuted Jews. This department's task was, in the first place, to handle matters of principle and to negotiate with Governments and National Red Cross Societies, as well as with the donor organizations. It was mainly engaged in supplying, with the assistance of the ICRC delegations abroad, the most effective material relief possible to this class of distressed persons, in accordance with the wishes of the donors. The Special Aid Division refrained from action, however, whenever the Jewish organizations, particularly the American Joint Distribution Committee, were able to carry out their work unaided. Such was not the case during the most critical period of the war, in 1944 and 1945, when the National-Socialist persecutions reached their climax. At this time, the Jewish organizations were powerless, and the International Red Cross was the only hope of many thousands. The work of the Special Aid Division then developed greatly, despite the fact that it had no juridical terms of reference and was not strictly part of the Committee's traditional work. The Division pursued its task even during the post-war period, until the Jewish organizations were again able to assist the members of their community direct and without any outside help.

The Joint Relief Commission received large sums from Jews in countries either neutral, or at war with Germany, particularly America and Switzerland ; it even succeeded in collecting money in some of the States subservient to Germany. Considerable sums were handed direct by wealthy Jews in Rumania to the Committee's delegation in Bucharest, for local purchases. The ICRC also forwarded to that delegation money gifts for the same purpose which had reached Geneva from Jews abroad.

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 641-657.

² See pp. 338-340.

The principal donors were :

(1) — The *American Joint Distribution Committee* (called for short the " Joint "), with headquarters in New York, and a representative in Switzerland ;

(2) — The *Jewish World Congress*, with headquarters in New York, and a representative in Switzerland ;

(3) — The *Schweizerische Hilfsverein für jüdische Flüchtlinge im Ausland* (for short : " Hijefs "), with headquarters in Montreux ;

(4) — The *Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America and Canada*, which had a branch at Montreux ;

(5) — The *Union O.S.E.* (Union of Child Welfare Societies), whose Swiss headquarters are at Geneva.

In addition, the ICRC was in constant touch with the major refugee organizations, particularly with the *Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees* and the *War Refugee Board*.

(1) — The Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees, in London, which had replaced the former Nansen Office, was dependent on the League of Nations. It often applied to the ICRC for information and was regularly advised of the work done by the Joint Relief Commission.

(2) — The War Refugee Board, in Washington, set up at the beginning of 1944 by President Roosevelt, gave valuable support to the Committee's relief work, particularly during the later months of the war in Europe ¹. It enjoyed certain facilities for the despatch of relief supplies through the blockade and for the transfer of money, (e. g. conversion of dollars into Swiss francs, for purchases in Switzerland on the account of the " Joint ", which was the largest Jewish donor).

* * *

The position of the Jews in the Axis countries other than Germany was uncertain, and the right to give them assistance

¹ See above pp. 81 and 336.

that existed at one time, could be cancelled at any moment. Moreover, the Jews were not everywhere treated alike: the greater the pressure exerted by Germany on her satellites, the harsher their anti-Semitic policy.

By adapting itself to these circumstances, the ICRC quickly put two distinct methods into operation:

- (1) — Dispatch of relief in kind through the Joint Relief Commission;
- (2) — Transmission of funds for local purchases by the ICRC.

These methods were adopted according to the degree of tolerance shown by the Powers concerned, and to the political and economic circumstances of the countries where the scheme was to be carried out. Both were sometimes applied simultaneously.

Relief in kind was sent to countries where the impoverished state of the market precluded local purchasing. To help the distressed population in these areas, the Joint Relief Commission forwarded goods bought in other countries, particularly in neutral European countries, such as Switzerland, Portugal and Turkey. These purchases were made with the funds which Jewish donors of various nationalities put at the disposal of the ICRC.

The despatch of goods was hampered by difficulties of many kinds:

- (1) — Lack of funds for purchasing in the overseas markets still available, and in neutral or occupied countries in Europe;
- (2) — Scarcity of commodities in neutral countries and export difficulties due to the restrictions imposed by these countries, to safeguard their own provisioning;
- (3) — Difficulties caused by the absence of land and sea transport, and by the damage to the railway systems in the countries at war;
- (4) — Difficulty in releasing frozen funds and supplies, and in conveying money and supplies to Switzerland through

the blockade. Thus, the Joint Relief Commission was not allowed to forward parcels containing goods that had been the subject of a navicert, except those received from the War Refugee Board. The transfer of funds by Governments in exile in London was also prohibited ¹.

Despite all these obstacles, the Joint Relief Commission succeeded in carrying on relief work in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy, Yugoslavia, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland, and later in the Balkan countries after their liberation ².

Whilst the Joint Relief Commission provided commodities, the ICRC arranged the transfer of funds for the purchase of goods in countries where stocks of food, clothing and medicaments were still sufficient, but were available only to Christians or "Aryans". This was the case in Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where anti-Semitic regulations had reduced the Jewish population to a state of utter destitution.

Transfers of funds offered the following advantages :

- (1) — The local purchase of much-needed goods circumvented the blockade ;
- (2) — Transport problems, if any, were confined to the country where the work was being carried on ;
- (3) — Free exchanges enabled the ICRC to increase largely the purchasing power of available funds, and to take advantage of local markets ;
- (4) — At certain times, the supplies bought by the ICRC delegates in Balkan countries could be sent to groups of deported Jews in Austria, and even in Germany.

As a rule, the relief funds were utilised by the local Jewish organizations. During the critical period, these bodies worked

¹ See above p. 377.

² For relief to concentration camps and ghettos organized as closed camps, see pp. 73 and 335 et seq. For relief to free Jewish populations, see the Joint Relief Commission's Report.

under the auspices and the protection of the Committee's delegations. In the spring of 1944, the donors began to place Swiss francs and U. S. dollars at the disposal of the ICRC.

This method of work obliged the ICRC and its delegates abroad to carry out large-scale banking and exchange operations. In the Balkan countries, particularly Rumania, Hungary and Slovakia, relief for the Jewish population was the most pressing task before the Committee's delegates. Some skill was needed to get authority from the National Banks to negotiate foreign currency on the open market. It was only through the influence of the ICRC and its delegation that this method, allowing the best utilisation of the credits made available by relief societies, was specially permitted by the Swiss Authorities and by those of the Balkan countries.

The operation usually ran along the following lines: the donor deposited a certain amount to the account of the ICRC at Geneva; the latter telegraphed the figure to its delegations and these, after obtaining the consent of the national authorities, sold the credits to private individuals and requested the ICRC by telegram to deposit the amounts thus sold to the buyer's account.

When, in the latter part of 1944, postal traffic and telegraphic communication between Geneva and both Hungary and Rumania were suspended, the delegations were compelled to resort to other means of financing relief to the Jews. Recourse was had to the issue of certificates. In Bucharest, these certificates were nominal and not transferable, and could not be endorsed. The holders could use them solely to cash, at the ICRC Treasury in Geneva, the amount named. The Budapest delegation, for reasons beyond its control, was compelled to issue bearer certificates, at the risk of their being used for speculative purposes.

In this way, the ICRC issued 426 certificates for Bucharest, representing a total of 6,665,880 Swiss francs, and 687 certificates for Budapest, to the total value of 3,731,550 Swiss francs.

The greater the difficulties which the Joint Relief Commission experienced in sending goods from Geneva, the more freely did the ICRC have recourse to the transfer of funds for the local purchase of foodstuffs. These funds also allowed

the delegations to take immediate action, in emergencies. At the most critical period of anti-Semitic persecution, the ICRC delegates set up in certain towns, e. g. Budapest, children's homes where they placed Jewish children under their protection. They also opened a certain number of communal kitchens, each distributing about a hundred hot meals daily. Finally, reception centres and shelters were organized for the Jews who had escaped from concentration camps after the liberation.

Financing of Relief in Various Countries

(a) — *Rumania.*

In 1943, the ICRC, to which Jewish circles increasingly appealed in behalf of the Jews in Rumania, considered the possibility of relief work, especially in Transnistria. Its difficulty was enhanced by the fact that the ICRC had only one delegate at Bucharest, who was moreover charged with other pressing duties.

To avoid delay, the delegate made arrangements with the Rumanian Red Cross, who consented to carry out this work, in agreement with Jewish circles, whilst the ICRC delegate's task was limited to general supervision and to any local checks he might think desirable.

This method was later extended and improved. The Jewish organizations themselves made purchases in Rumania, and handed over the goods (clothing, food and medical stores) to the Rumanian Red Cross, which distributed them in Transnistria and elsewhere. The ICRC delegate visited this province and was able to assure himself that the allocation was equitable.

The number of people assisted was roughly 220,000. The following were the classes chiefly in need of relief :

- (a) — People evacuated and deported to Transnistria in 1941 from Bukovina, Bessarabia and Northern Moldavia ;
- (b) — Jews due for emigration to Palestine ;

- (c) — Jews who had been ruined by the seizure of their property and their exclusion from certain professions;
- (d) — People rendered homeless by air raids on Bucharest and Ploesti.

This relief scheme had the support of the Rumanian authorities. It was started in November, 1943, with a first donation from the " Joint " of 100,000 Swiss francs, which was transferred to Rumania at the low rate of 45 lei for 1 Swiss franc. The Rumanian Red Cross made a grant from its own funds, bringing the total to 10 million lei in all. Most of this money served for the purchase in Rumania of clothing and footwear, which was distributed in the ghettos of Transnistria.

A further donation from the " Joint " of 100,000 dollars was transferred to the ICRC with the aid of the War Refugee Board. Of the 420,000 Swiss francs obtained by conversion, 100,000 francs were allocated to relief work for the Jewish population in Rumania. This time, the amount was not transferred through official channels, but made available to the ICRC delegation in Bucharest, which managed to obtain 33 million lei, at the rate therefore of 330 lei for 1 Swiss franc. This sum was allocated as follows :

- 8,000,000 lei for the purchase of underwear and clothing, all of which was distributed by the Jewish Centre at Bucharest ;
- 15,000,000 lei for the purchase of food, primarily for emigrants to Palestine on board the *Taris*. As the ship was unable to sail, the supplies were given to the destitute Jewish population ;
- 10,000,000 lei for relief in cash, clothing, food and lodging for war victims, especially for repatriates from Transnistria, refugees from Bessarabia and victims of air raids.

In May, 1944, four wagonloads of food were sent from Istanbul to Rumania. The supplies they carried (nuts, dried raisins, etc.) were of small use to the distressed persons, and were

therefore sold for general relief work. The ICRC delegate paid out to Polish refugee Jews the allowances he had received from Jewish organizations in Bucharest. In addition, 250 million lei were used for the relief of 12,000 to 14,000 persons repatriated from Transnistria.

The local Jewish organizations were very active. At the request of the "Joint", the ICRC delegate asked the well-to-do Jewish circles in Bucharest to subscribe to aid for their co-religionists in need; during the first nine months of 1944, a total of 847 million lei was thus collected.

From the summer of 1944, the transactions of the "Joint" reached the following levels:

- 4 million Swiss francs, during the second half of 1944;
- 8 million Swiss francs, during the first quarter of 1945;
- 10 million Swiss francs, during the second quarter of 1945.

Some of this money was utilised in neighbouring countries. At the beginning of 1945, Bucharest became the centre of relief work for the Jews in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Sub-Carpathian Russia. This work could be organized only in Rumania.

(b)—*Hungary.*

Although relief for the Jews was permitted by the Rumanian authorities, this was not the case in Hungary. The ICRC delegate at Budapest nevertheless succeeded in setting on foot relief work similar to that carried out by his colleague in Bucharest.

The condition of the Jewish population in Hungary became particularly tragic after the German occupation in March 1944. The ICRC, which was unable to obtain any remission of the new measures affecting the Jews, endeavoured to give them practical assistance.

The Jewish Senate in Budapest had appealed for help, particularly in the shape of money, as food and medicaments were available on the spot. In agreement with the representative of the "Joint" in Switzerland, the ICRC at once deposited

six million pengös with its Budapest delegate, to which further sums were added later. The delegate was thus able to purchase both food and medical stores in Hungary and the adjacent countries, for distribution to the Jews confined in the *Judenhäuser*, the work camps and the ghettos. The delegate in Bratislava contributed to this work by purchasing foodstuffs, particularly sugar in Slovakia, which he sent to Hungary. These supplies were deposited in warehouses and put at the disposal of the *Judenbüro*.

When, early in November, 1944, the Hungarian Fascists began the deportation of 35,000 to 45,000 Jews, the ICRC delegate travelled along the route from Budapest to Vienna and issued food and medical relief to these unfortunate people, who were being driven to their destination in columns and on foot. The rest of the Jewish population (the aged and unfit, children, old men and sick people) who had been assembled in the ghetto at Budapest, were fed as well as circumstances permitted.

As soon as Budapest was liberated by the Soviet forces, the ICRC delegate was able to purchase about 350 tons of foodstuff in Rumania, for further distributions. Thanks to the credits from the "Joint", and to the combined efforts of the ICRC delegations and local Jewish organizations, stocks of food and medicaments were built up in Budapest.

(c)—*Slovakia*.

It was not until the uprising at the end of August, 1944, that the Slovak authorities started the mass arrest, imprisonment in concentration camps and transfer to Germany of the Jewish population in Slovakia. To escape from these measures the Jews were compelled to remain in hiding.

As there was no Jewish centre in this country, the ICRC delegate at Bratislava had great difficulty in issuing the money grants which were placed to his credit from the "Joint". Relief for Jews was then strictly prohibited. The delegate endeavoured, however, to assist the Jews in hiding by making payments to intermediaries, often trusted persons whom the

" Joint " had indicated by name. These subsidies enabled the Jews in hiding, who were unable to procure food in the usual manner, to obtain their supplies in the black market.

(d)—*Other Countries.*

When the Axis forces occupied Greece, the ICRC delegation did its best to assist the 55,000 Jews in Salonika. In July 1942, a census was taken, and most of the men between 18 and 45 were sent to labour battalions. The delegation gave them medical supplies. Towards the end of the autumn of 1942, the Jewish workers were discharged ; towards the middle of May, 1943, they were transferred to Germany. When their departure had been arranged by the German authorities, the ICRC delegate at Salonika made pressing appeals for the right to supply them with bread and milk. The only effect was that the Germans asked the ICRC to recall their delegate.

In Austria, the Jewish population was assisted by the ICRC delegation in Vienna. In this city there were, amongst others, 15,000 Jews deported from Hungary in 1944 and employed on forced labour. The ICRC delegate at Bratislava gave them food and clothing purchased in Slovakia.

Similar work was carried out by the ICRC delegate in Croatia. From May, 1943, until the armistice, all relief for destitute Jews was given through his intervention. The credit put at his disposal for this purpose amounted, in 1945, to 20,000 Swiss francs monthly.

The ICRC in Geneva received direct from Jewish organizations sums amounting to 22,817,000 Swiss francs for its relief to the Jewish population in the Balkan countries. The greater part of this money was transferred to Rumania and Hungary and utilised on the spot, mainly for the purchase of food, clothing and medical supplies.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that the ICRC, in agreement with the " Joint ", deducted between 5 and 7 per cent from the funds sent by the latter, and set it aside for aid to war victims, irrespective of race, nationality or

religion. Thanks to these donations of Jewish origin, the ICRC was able to meet the cost of various relief schemes, in particular homes for children and heated hutments.

§ 2. CAMPS IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

During the years which preceded the second World War, many thousands of persons had to leave their native country because of political or racial persecution. Large numbers found an asylum in France.

In September, 1939, the French Government, for security reasons, assembled these refugees in camps in the South of France, where there were already many Spanish Republicans who had escaped from Spain at the end of the Civil War.

In the spring of 1940, during the Battle of France, great numbers of refugees moved towards the South and were for the most part accommodated in these camps. The armistice of June, 1940, far from leading to their release, increased the population of the camps by the inclusion of nationals of countries at war with the Axis, political suspects and "undesirable" aliens. This unexpected influx, added to the breakdown of transport, made the provisioning of the camps far more difficult.

The ICRC, on learning of this disquieting situation, managed to obtain information on the location and number of the camps, which the French Ministry of the Interior had hitherto refused to reveal. The Committee at once turned to all welfare organizations able to assist the internees, and called for financial help.

An immediate response came from the Swiss Red Cross and other Swiss relief organizations, and the Swiss Government authorized the ICRC to export the foodstuffs and medical stores it had purchased with the funds collected. Relief consignments were addressed to the camp commandants and to the representatives of the welfare organizations which had permission to work in the assembly centres. The first consignment left Geneva

on July 20, 1940, and others soon followed. Thus, in July and August the camps received about :

- 3,000 cases of condensed milk ;
- 12,000 kilos of powdered milk ;
- 5,000 food and clothing parcels.

The ICRC obtained receipts for these goods and handed them to the donor organizations.

This work was pursued with all possible speed. On its inception, the Joint Relief Commission seconded the Committee's requests for funds, and for free transport and exemption from customs dues ¹.

Since they were intended for refugees, the earliest shipments by the Committee were in the nature of relief for civilians. As the refugees were, however, under detention, the ICRC took steps to ensure that they should have the same treatment, whenever possible, as that accorded to prisoners of war under the 1929 Convention. The principal object of this equality of treatment was to allow relief supplies collected in countries overseas to pass through the blockade. Since the detainees were for the most part nationals of countries no longer at war with the Vichy Government (most of them were German and Austrian Jews, and citizens of countries allied with the Axis), they could not be regarded as civilian internees. The majority were therefore subject to the Ministry of the Interior, which detained them for security reasons, whilst civilian internees proper and the Spanish Republicans were under the authority of the Ministry of War.

In the summer of 1940, the ICRC applied to the blockade authorities for the free passage of relief supplies from overseas for women and child victims of the war in Europe ; on this occasion, it also described the critical situation of the camps in the South of France, and its desire to improve conditions in any way possible. Despite the interest shown by public opinion in Great Britain, no relaxation of the blockade could be secured. Undeterred, the ICRC pursued its negotiations.

¹ For details, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

Before making any response to the numerous appeals received, the Committee had to know exactly what were the requirements of each camp, and therefore obtained authority from the French Government to make visits. In November, 1940, a member of the Committee was able to inspect the camps at Gurs, Le Vernetin (Ariège) and Argelès-sur-Mer, containing respectively 12,047, 3,113, and 12,046 persons. He distributed 300 kilos of dressings, medical stores and surgical instruments, and a sum of 265,000 French francs, contributed by nationals of various countries for their detained relatives or friends.

The visit supplied evidence of grave needs, particularly for clothing, footwear, foodstuffs, medical stores and even hutments. The ICRC notified these requirements to the French authorities and the American Red Cross. On January 17, 1941, it telegraphed to the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London, once again appealing for an exception in favour of these refugees.

The presence of British subjects in these camps may possibly have influenced the attitude of the Allied authorities. At all events, the blockade authorities informed the ICRC on April 24, 1941, that they agreed to the despatch of relief from overseas to the camps in the South of France, on the following conditions :

- (1) — Free transport and exemption from customs dues in French territory ;
- (2) — Collective shipments only to be sent ;
- (3) — Supervision of issue by the International Red Cross, or the Friends Service Committee, acting in cooperation with camp committees elected by the detainees ;
- (4) — Periodical reports on the arrival and issue of relief stores, for the information of the Ministry of Economic Warfare.

These conditions were submitted to the French Government and the French Red Cross at Vichy, who informed the ICRC of their entire agreement in respect of points (1), (2) and (4). As regards point (3), they proposed that the issues should be entrusted to committees comprising members of the local French Red Cross and of the *Service social d'aide aux émigrants*.

The point was discussed at the end of 1941 during a second visit of a member of the ICRC to Vichy France ; finally, on January 30, 1942, the French authorities accepted the suggested procedure for the issue of relief from overseas to the camps in Southern France, and its supervision by a neutral organization.

After the United States entered the war, it naturally became more difficult to find North and South American donors inclined to send relief to internees in non-occupied France ; the Joint Relief Commission had to confine itself to sending medicaments.

On the other hand, the French Government and the blockade authorities agreed that a large consignment of clothing from the American Friends Service Committee should be unloaded at Lisbon at the end of 1941, and forwarded in early 1942 to the camps in Southern France. The operation was not easy, but the belligerents agreed that this clothing should, as an exception, be conveyed by a vessel assigned to the transport of PW parcels between Lisbon and Marseilles, under the Red Cross flag. The issue of this clothing in the camps was supervised by the ICRC delegate at Marseilles ¹.

During their visits, the Committee's representatives noted that the detaining authorities had not always succeeded, despite their earnest endeavours, in sufficiently improving the sanitary installations of the camps, or the feeding and clothing of the internees.

After the total occupation of France in November 1942, a large number of " hébergés " were arrested and deported and the task of feeding the remainder became increasingly difficult. By perseverance and the use of every opportunity, the ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission contrived to supply the camps, but this help was irregular and inadequate. Unlike the English-speaking civilians who, from 1943 onwards, were regarded in France as civilian internees and consequently eligible for relief, the " hébergés " did not come under the 1929 Convention. Furthermore, the welfare organizations that had hitherto assisted them, had, as the result of other calls, ceased

¹ See Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

to take the same active interest in these people. The ICRC and the Joint Relief Commission, with no funds of their own, were in consequence seriously handicapped.

To complete the account of the ICRC's work in the camps of Southern France, we should allude to the forwarding of individual parcels and currency transfers. Relatives and friends who did not know the addresses of internees applied to the Committee, instead of sending parcels direct. The ICRC, in turn, was able to send them on, thanks to the "postal transit service" which it had set up for the purpose at the outbreak of war ¹.

Unfortunately, the French post office collected the cost of transport and customs dues from the consignees, most of whom were unable to pay; thus, a large number of parcels were held up in the camps, involving the loss of all perishable contents. Thanks to negotiations by the ICRC, individual parcels were finally exempted from the above charges, but not from the consumer tax. Furthermore, the exemption held only if the parcels were assembled at Geneva and addressed to the *Comité de la Reconnaissance française*, who would forward them to the consignees through the local committees of the French Red Cross. People who were anxious to send gift parcels to the internees could not do so as freely as they would have liked.

The ICRC also did everything it could to promote the transfer of currency. On February 26, 1941, the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees under the League of Nations, in London, asked the Committee to distribute a sum of 100,000 French francs (which was subsequently doubled), to German and Austrian members of the International Brigade detained in the camps at Gurs, Le Vernet and Argelès. The Joint Relief Commission was instructed by the ICRC to carry out this transfer and finally succeeded, after negotiations which lasted over a year ².

¹ See above, p. 11.

² For details, see Report of the Joint Relief Commission.

§ 3. JAPANESE NATIONALS IN LATIN AMERICA

In March, 1944, the Japanese Red Cross in Tokyo made a gift of 150,000 yen to the ICRC, through the Japanese Legation in Berne, for medical care to indigent Japanese in certain Latin American States. This contribution was to be allocated as follows :

Bolivia	4 per cent	Bol.	58,560.70
Brazil	13 " "	CR.	89,772.30
Chile	4 " "	Ch. dols.	42,918.20
Colombia	2 " "	Pes.	1,179.62
Cuba	7 " "	US. dols.	2,442.—
Mexico	24 " "	Pes.	40,604.—
Paraguay	4 " "	US. dols.	1,395.—
Peru	42 " "	Sol.	94,909.69

The Japanese Legation in Berne asked that the money should be entrusted to the ICRC delegates. Since there were no such delegates in Chile, Peru or Paraguay, recourse was had in these countries to the services of the National Red Cross Societies. The general control of the scheme was entrusted to the ICRC delegate in Buenos Aires, who was instructed to take all necessary action, to disburse the funds, and to collect and forward the accounts and receipts to Geneva. These papers were forwarded regularly from Geneva to the Japanese Red Cross. According to the wishes of the donors :

(1) — The funds were intended solely for the medical care of non-interned indigent Japanese.

(2) — Wherever practicable, the cooperation of the Japanese colonies or their committees was to be enlisted, particularly in the selection of beneficiaries.

(3) — The ICRC was responsible to the Japanese Red Cross for the use of these funds.

(4) — Detailed accounts and, if possible, receipts were to be sent at regular intervals to Geneva, as a rule monthly.

Wherever possible, the Protecting Power should also be consulted on the use of the funds and the selection of beneficiaries.

These instructions were communicated to the agencies concerned, namely the ICRC delegates, the Red Cross Societies and the Protecting Powers.

The execution of this particular relief scheme was by no means easy, and much telegraphic correspondence was required for the arrangements with the local Japanese organizations, and to obtain authority for currency transfers. By the end of May, 1944, however, most of the above amounts had reached the recipients. In Peru, Paraguay, Chile and particularly Cuba, instructions were strictly carried out, but this proved impossible in the other countries.

Mexico.

The ICRC delegate in Mexico made an agreement with the Japanese Mutual Aid Committee as to the use of the funds. This Committee had forty-eight delegates throughout the country, and was thus informed of all Japanese nationals who were in need of medical attention. The ICRC delegate made periodical allocations to the committee, and sent monthly reports to Geneva.

Chile, Peru, Paraguay.

In the absence of any ICRC delegation in these three countries, responsibility fell to the delegation in the Argentine, which enlisted the help of the National Red Cross Societies and the Protecting Powers, and issued precise instructions as to the categories eligible for relief. All accounts and receipts had to be forwarded to Geneva through the delegation at Buenos Aires.

In Chile, the National Red Cross agreed to administer the funds, with the help of two Japanese representatives. In point of fact, the money was entrusted to the Swedish Legation at Santiago, which looked after Japanese interests, answered applications and drew up the accounts. The statements were sent to the delegation at Buenos Aires through the Chilean Red Cross.

In Peru, this work was the charge of the National Red Cross, acting in collaboration with four Japanese representatives. Regular accounts and receipts were sent to the delegation at Buenos Aires.

In Paraguay, arrangements were made with the National Red Cross and the Spanish Legation, which looked after Japanese interests. But as no applications were received, the donors agreed that the available money should be held back for possible use in other South American countries. It was finally used for Japanese nationals in Cuba.

Cuba.

During a first visit to Cuba, in September, 1944, the ICRC delegate to the West Indies made arrangements with the Cuban Red Cross and left a certain sum of money in its hands. These funds, and further sums which were paid in later, were administered jointly by the Cuban Red Cross and Japanese representatives. The main difficulty was the fact the ICRC delegate resided in Washington and could only visit Cuba at rare intervals.

Following a second trip, the delegate informed the Committee, in September 1945, on the difficult position of Japanese internees who were due for early release. He stated that all were short of clothing and food, whilst they received medical aid from the Government and the Cuban Red Cross. Later, the delegate stated that some of the released internees were in need of restoratives and vitamins, and asked for authority to purchase these with the balance of the funds assigned for Japanese nationals in Cuba. With the consent of the donors, 1,395 dollars originally provided for Paraguay, which could not be used there, were made over by the Committee. Thus, the funds assigned to Cuba were devoted almost entirely to medical care, whilst the quota first intended for Paraguay went to the purchase of clothing, foodstuffs, restoratives and vitamins for released Japanese internees. The ICRC delegate was able to buy this clothing cheaply in Haiti and to send it free of charge to Cuba.

Bolivia.

Arrangements were made by the ICRC delegate at La Paz, but no Japanese nationals applied for medical care.

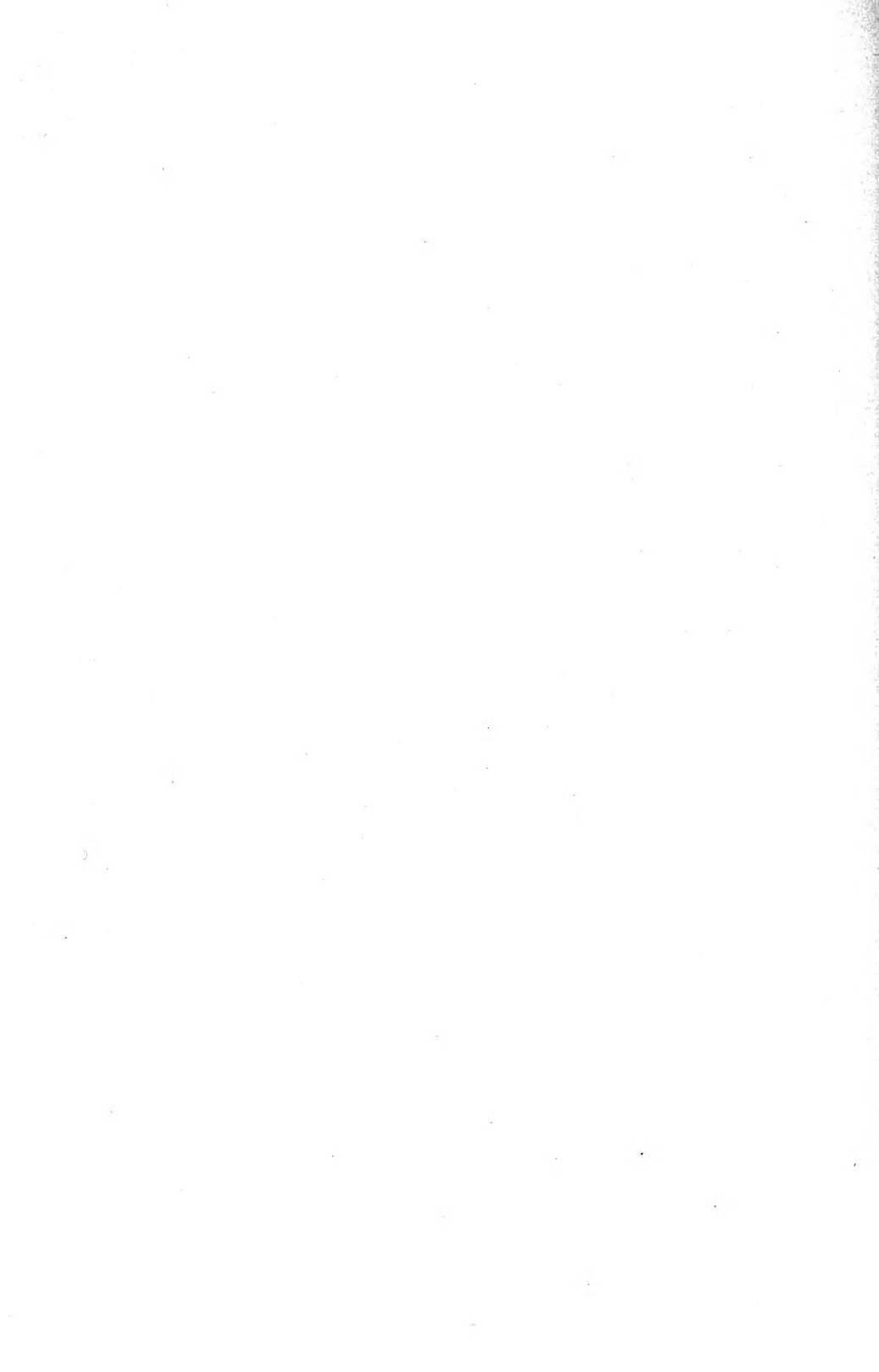
Colombia.

No medical aid was needed. Certain Japanese families, whose breadwinners had been interned, were however in very straitened circumstances, and the ICRC delegate decided to use for their relief part of the funds at his disposal.

Brazil.

The ICRC delegate at Rio de Janeiro proposed to enlist the support of the Papal Nuncio, who was looking after Japanese interests in Brazil, and was thus able to make contact with all the Japanese colonies scattered throughout this vast area. The donors accepted the suggestion. When approached, the Nuncio replied that he could only undertake this duty if he was not asked to confine himself to medical aid, since he was anxious to combine this new task with the work he was already doing, on behalf of the Vatican, for the Japanese. The donors having agreed, the funds were handed over to the Nuncio, who applied them both to medical aid and the purchase of foodstuffs, clothing, etc. The receipts were sent to Geneva.

The grant made by the Japanese Red Cross has not yet been completely disbursed, and the balance is drawn upon, as occasion arises.



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ERRATA

Page 14, line 1.

This line should be indented and start a new paragraph.

Page 112, line 5.

For "under-nourishment" read "undernourishment".

Page 165, line 3.

For "below" read "below¹".

Page 168, line 6 from bottom.

For "sentto" read "sent to".

Page 221, sub-title.

For "Parcels to" read "Parcels for".

Page 237, sub-title "Setting up...".

Delete both brackets.

Page 252, line 3.

For "mobilise das" read "mobilised as".

Page 348, line 11 from below.

For "five kilo" read "five-kilo".

Page 469, line 10 from below.

For "co tinue" read "continue".
